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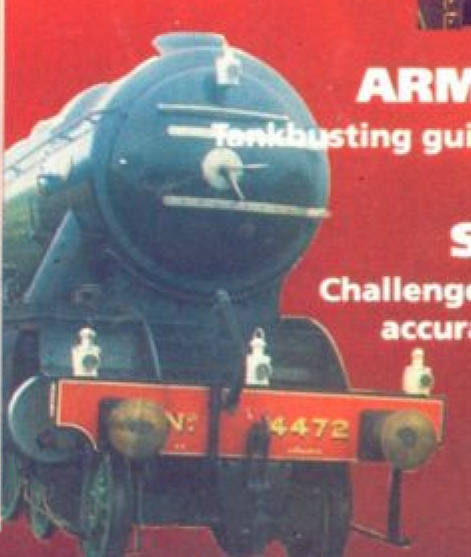

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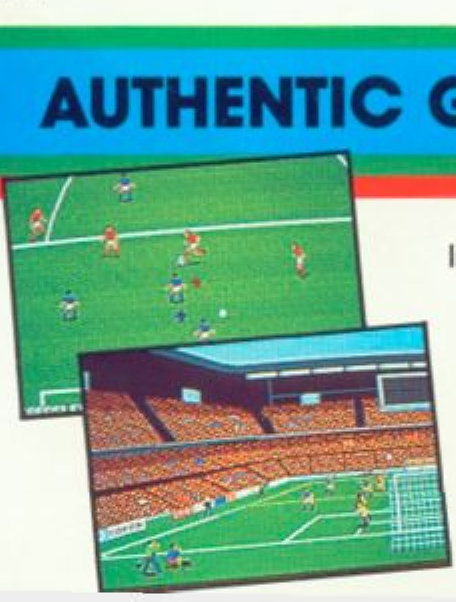

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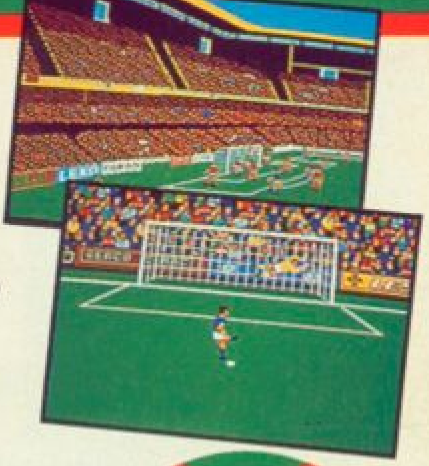

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Priory Court
Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU
Tel: 01-251 6222
Fax: 01-490 0991

Editor
Steve Cooke

Deputy Editor
Rik Haynes

Reviews Editor
Laurence Scotford

Design Editor
Jim Willis

Contributors
Eugene Lacey
John Cook
Christina Erskine
Pat Winstanley
Mark Smiddy
Gordon Lee
Russell Patient
Nicola Broad
Jay Sacks

Additional Design By
Julia Wiseman

Illustration
Geoff Fowler

Photography
Edward Park

Advertising Manager
Garry Williams

Deputy Advertising Manager
Jerry Hall

Advertising Production
Melanie Costin

Publisher
Terry Pratt

SUBSCRIPTIONS
EMAP Frontline, Subscriptions Department
1 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road,
Peterborough, PE1 2RP
0733 555161

COLOUR ORIGINATION
Balmoral Graphics, Canonbury Yd, N1
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SPECIALS

LORD OF THE SKIES **18**
An exclusive report from Baltimore, USA on Microprose's **cloud-busting arcade flight sim.**

HOLLYWOOD INTERACTIVE .. **23**
Find out just what sort of games you could be playing next year on your CD-I. ACE reporters penetrate the offices of AIM in Los Angeles – world centre for **interactive disk entertainment.**

THE ACE CHALLENGE **37**
In our continuing hunt for the ultimate games machine, we profile the **awesomely powerful** Cybercube from Canada – a machine that makes the ST and Amiga look like **pocket calculators.**

WHAM BANG SAM **27**
Could an 8-bit micro **knock the silicon** out of the ST? Surely not...no it's impossible...never...er....

NICE ONE! **88**
Mirrorsoft announce **new titles and new technology** at a luxury hotel in the South of France.

A LYNX IN THE LIFE **81**
ACE received an **anonymous letter** from a **Lynx owner** this month. We thought you should read it...

ATARI SPEAKS **94**
It's official – ACE interviews Bob Gleadow about the Panther, the Lynx, and other developments at Atari UK. Will there ever be a **£199 ST**?

NEO-GEO UPDATE **35**
Raw sex in silicon. The Neo-Geo – **brute processing power** and the most **expensive video games** in the history of computer entertainment.

THE *ACE* TREATMENT

The final production version of *Midwinter* hits the streets – how does it play? Mirrorsoft produce one of the most complex naval strategy games ever in *Harpoon*, and *Manchester United* challenges *Player Manager* for league domination. Remember: every game reviewed in ACE is the *finished product* – pre-production versions are also tested, but not rated. They're marked with a * in the list below. That way you can be sure the games we test are the games you play...

CASTLE MASTER *Incentive* 66
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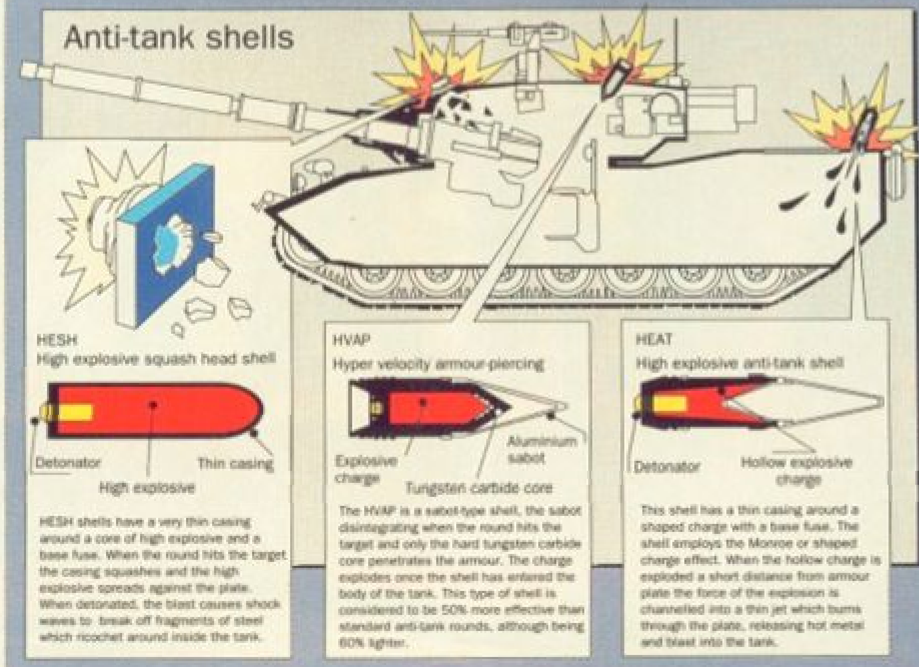
TRAINS, PLANES, AUTOMOBILES.. ..AND TANKS



HESH shells have a very thin casing around a core of high explosive and a base fuse. When the round hits the target the casing squashes and the high explosive spreads against the plate. When detonated, the blast causes shock waves to break off fragments of steel which ricochet around inside the tank.

The HVAP is a sabot-type shell, the sabot disintegrating when the round hits the target and only the hard tungsten carbide core penetrates the armour. The charge explodes once the shell has entered the body of the tank. This type of shell is considered to be 50% more effective than standard anti-tank rounds, although being 60% lighter.

This shell has a thin casing around a shaped charge with a base fuse. The shell employs the Monroe or shaped charge effect. When the hollow charge is exploded a short distance from armour plate the force of the explosion is channelled into a thin jet which burns through the plate, releasing hot metal and blast into the tank.

Heavy metal **gets up steam** with *Railroad Tycoon* (page 32), **storms the skies** in Microprose's F15 coin-op (page 18), **burns rubber** in *Skidmarks* from DSI (page 64), and gets **all tanked up** in the definitive ACE feature on armoured warfare (page 69).

WALK TALL,

THE RACE IS ON

CD games technology took one step closer this month with Mirrorsoft's announcement (see page 88) that they are to be developing CD titles for release in 1991. Some of these titles will be produced through a joint-venture agreement with Cinemaware for the development of new technology. But what about other UK companies?. The CD ROM games revolution is rapidly approaching and the launch of CD-I in this country is now exactly a year away. Commodore and (reputedly) Atari are working on CD systems. It's all go...Except, that is, for the software houses (Mirrorsoft excepted). It's understandable that softco's should be reluctant to develop for a market that doesn't yet exist, but let's not forget that these titles will be development intensive and could take many months to produce. US companies know this - they are already busy developing titles for existing CD platforms (NEC and FM Towns) to ease their transition to the new technology. British companies MUST follow suit as quickly as possible if they are not to be left behind in the race to dominate tomorrow's games market. Those who can't go it alone should look for partnerships either with the US or other UK companies - otherwise the world's most inventive software industry could be heading for a fall.

© Pacific Data Images. Taken from their award winning animation, Locomotion

Sesame Street goes Compact Disk Interactive on page 23.

GAMEPLAY

SCREENTEST **37**
Harpoon – if you want a more realistic sea-going experience, **join the Navy.** Plus *Manchester United* – can it **trample** over *Player Manager*? And a special look at **old, gold, glorious games** now out on 16-bit.

STEAM DREAM **32**
Forget the **Chattanooga Choo Choo** – this is the real thing. Raise cash, build trains and **make tracks** in Sid Meier's superlative railroad simulator.

ARMOURGEDDON **69**
Tanks in history, tanks in silicon: the definitive guide to the **ultimate armour-plated experience.**

BRAVE NEW WORLDS **83**
The latest in the AD&D series, *Champions of Krynn,* is vigorously playtested by the Champion of Wigan, Pat Winstanley.

TRICKS AND TACTICS **75**
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BEYOND BEASTBUSTERS **96**
Who's killing who in the arcades this month? John Cook investigates...

NINTENDO UPDATE **58**
Life Force picks up where *Salamander* left off, plus *Double Dribble* and *Track and Field II.*

REGULARS

ACE NEWS **7**
A **CD-ST** under development? Data East (of Robocop fame) are developing a **new handheld**. Logotron launch the **next Millenium**...and all's right with world.

SHOOT FROM THE LIP **13**
ACE readers prove once again that the pen is **mightier than the smart bomb.**

FREE ISSUE! **30**
Some people have **all the luck** – they just sit back and wait for ACE to slip through their letterbox – and they get some **special reader benefits** as well. They're called subscribers. **Join them.**

IN THE PINK **99**
Hardware, software, puzzles, reader's ads, dealer information, diary, and if that's not enough you also get the **best charts** in the industry – all **in the pink**.

PAGE 11 .... **11**
A **new regular monthly section**, that takes the **kick** out of tomorrow's games and **stamps** it on today's pages..

Castle Master
COURTYARD
Castle Master – *the most advanced Freescape game to date; see page 66*

WIN! WIN! WIN!

WALK CD **91**
There's a new **CD Walkman** on the streets. And Impressions have got **three** for lucky ACE readers to celebrate the launch of *Renaissance.* Plus **50 prizes** for runners-up.

TYCOON **100**
Don't forget the ACE Stockmarket – the **best charts around** AND the chance grab yourself some prizes...

WALK CD

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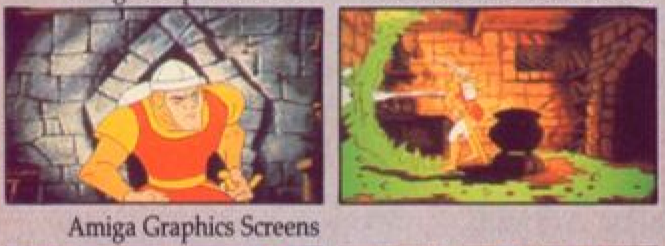
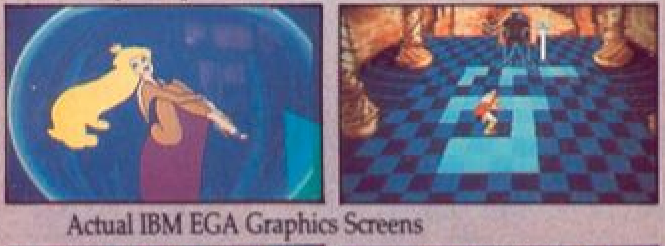
Amiga Graphics Screens



Amiga Graphics Screens



Actual IBM EGA Graphics Screens

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ACE NEWS

ST-CD BEING DEVELOPED, NEW SOFTWARE LABELS, UNSUNG HEROES

ATARI DEVELOPING CD-ST

Atari is secretly developing a CD device for the ST at its hardware engineering think-tank in Sunnyvale, California. No details are available at present, but a machine is likely to be launched in the autumn.

An Atari spokesperson confirmed, "We're developing a range of hi-tech gadgets in the States," but denied that Atari is currently working on a CD-ST. "Atari will have a CD device when the market is interested."

Atari showed its new "hi-tech gadgets" to over 90 software developers at a special two-day conference held in Oxfordshire last month. These STE and Lynx software developers have all signed strict non-disclosure agreements, leading ACE to believe Atari has something special up its sleeve.

Atari's arch-rival is also developing a CD-micro based around an existing 16-bit micro. Although the Amiga Baby CD machine has yet to be publicly announced or seen, Commodore showed a working model to software developers at this year's Winter CES show in Las Vegas. Commodore is still denying its existence to the press.

Baby is a totally restyled version of the Amiga A500, giving it the matt black look of a piece of Japanese hi-fi hi-tech. It has a built-in CD-ROM drive with a storage capacity of over 500Mb of data, allowing you to store in the region of 300-500 games titles on a single compact disc. All Baby games are enhanced versions of standard Amiga titles with CD-quality music and sound-effects. Like similar CD-ROM systems such as the Fujitsu FM Towns and NEC PC Engine, you can also use the Baby's CD device to play ordinary music CD's. Baby uses infrared connections for mouse, joystick and keyboard. The standard system won't be supplied with a keyboard, and some of the standard A500 ports have also been stripped off. This is because Commodore is pitching the Baby as a new home entertainments system, not as a micro – it's aiming to create a new market.

Baby is expected to be on sale in the autumn for approximately £499 for the basic model, the wireless keyboard will cost another £30. Commodore recently held an Amiga Baby software developers conference in London involving major UK games publishers, so hopefully the system will have a wealth of software titles available for it at launch.

COIN-OP COMPANIES CREATE CONSOLES

Following the success of Sega with its games consoles and SNK's recent launch of the dual arcade/home NEO-GEO games system, other leading Japanese coin-op manufactures are rumoured to be working on their own consoles for the home market. If these companies do produce their own machines it would revolutionise the home console sector – it could even shake up the mighty Nintendo.

Information is very scarce at present, nobody is willing to openly talk about their future development plans, but ACE has managed to uncover details on at least one new console prototype.

Data East – the arcade firm responsible for *Robocop*, *Dragon Ninja* and *Kung-Fu Master* – is said to be working on a sensational 16-bit console with the best graphics display ever produced on a home-based system. Unfortunately no exact specification, price or release date details are available at present.

ACE will keep you informed of further developments in future reports, so watch this space. In the meantime, exclusive details of the revolutionary NEO-GEO games system appear on page 35...

NEC PLANS £99 PC ENGINE

After months of speculation, NEC is finally going to officially launch its cult PC Engine console in the UK. The price is expected to be £99, the release date is set for late summer. At present, the PC Engine is sold in this country by unofficial grey importers – without any endorsement from NEC itself.

The PC Engine was released in Japan about two years ago and went on sale in the States last year under the name Turbo-Grafix. It's an 8-bit machine with advanced audio-visual hardware. Some of the PC Engine games are incredible, for instance *R-Type* and *Gunhed* are probably the best shoot'em-ups on any home system. It also has an optional CD-ROM device and software.

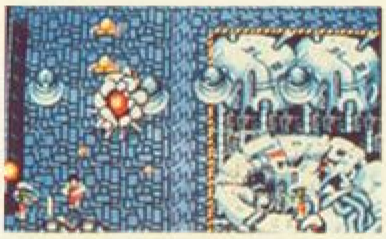
The £99 price, sexy graphics, striking sound and superlative games certainly make this baby an attractive purchase in the short-term, but the quiet nature of the Japanese PC Engine market may be a damaging long-term factor in terms of future software and peripheral support for this console.

ELECTROCOIN LAUNCHES SOFTWARE DIVISION

Electrocoin, the largest European arcade manufacturer, has set-up a software division to produce leisure software on home formats.

The first title to be released is *Time Soldiers* by SNK, the Japanese coin-op company responsible for *Ikari Warriors*, *Beast Busters* and the new NEO-GEO games system. A scroller-shooter, *Time Soldiers* is being converted to ST, Amiga and C64 – with Spectrum and CPC versions currently under consideration. Electrocoin Software is trying to exploit each machine's particular strengths, for instance the Amiga version includes simultaneous two-player control and multi-directional scrolling. In addition, extra features not found in the coin-op original have been incorporated to enhance the gameplay such as secret levels and bonus graphics.

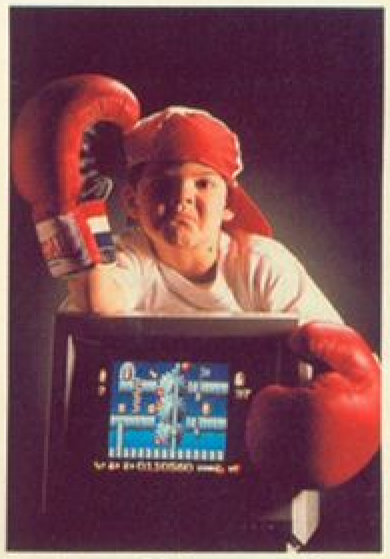
Although initial releases will be coin-op conversions, Electrocoin Software hopes to develop original titles in the future. This could eventually lead to original micro-based Electrocoin Software being converted over to coin-op format – though this reverse-trend has yet to enjoy any significant degree of success.



Journey into the land of the ST Time Soldier...

Luther De Gale, director of Electrocoin Software explained why the firm is now looking to build an in-house software development department, "Why pay a software development company to improve their skills?".

LOGOTRON GAINS MILLENNIUM



Logotron would glove you to play its new release!

Logotron Entertainment – the producer of *Archipelagos*, *XOR* and *StarRay* – has launched a new entertainments label dealing with arcade, adventure, futuristic simulations and strategy games.

Millennium will publish games on C64, ST, Amiga and PC while releases are possible on the evolving console and hand-held machines. The first three releases due are *Cloud Kingdoms*, *Resolution 101* and *Thunderstrike*. Inspired by *Bubble Bobble* and *New Zealand Story*, *Cloud Kingdoms* is an eight-way scrolling cutesy platform arcade adventure by Dene Carter, the programmer of Firebird's *Druid* and *Enlightenment*. While *Resolution 101* is a futuristic vehicle simulation featuring the 3D vector and sprite graphics routines first used in Astral Software's earlier *Archipelagos*. Finally, *Thunderstrike* is a polygon 3D arcade game inspired by the classic *Defender* and programmed by the Brian Pollock who was previously responsible for *Blasteroids* conversions.

MINDSCAPE HOUSE PARTY

Are you a talented games programmer, graphic artist or musician? Do you want to work for a leading US software company with offices situated in a picturesque Sussex farming estate? If so, Mindscape is looking for skillful games developers to join its new in-house squad.

Phil Harrison, Software Development Manager at Mindscape, told ACE, "We'll have four teams producing projects for the ST, Amiga, PC and Nintendo". Although 8-bit micros will initially be handled by freelance programmers, there are plans to bring some conversions in-house in the future. Harrison added, "We're looking for new people and are willing to train them up if necessary". If you're interested and think you've got what it takes, send examples of your work to Phil Harrison, Software Development Manager, Mindscape International Limited, PO Box 1019, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4DW. Alternatively, telephone 0444 86545 and ask for Phil Harrison.

SOFTWARE'S UNSUNG HEROES

Let's take time-out to go behind the scenes and talk to software's "unsung heroes". The guys that help the development of a game but are rarely thanked – or even known – for their extensive efforts. They can be found in every software developer around the world. Let's talk to the graphics designer and games tester.

Brian Flanagan (left), Jason Dutton and Steve Thomson (right) on their way to a lunch-time session at the arcades

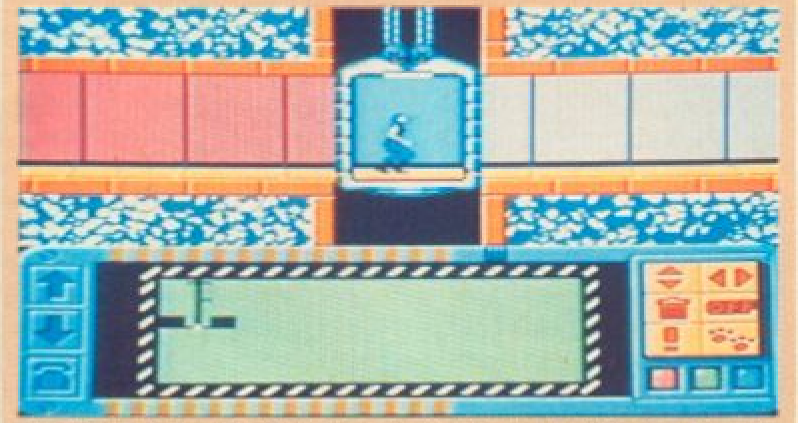
Brian Flanagan (19), Steve Thomson (18) and Jason Dutton (17) are three friends who just happen to work for Ocean. Flanagan and Thomson are graphic designers and Dutton is a games tester, sorry, technical adviser. When they're not playing games in the Ocean programming dungeons, they're out in the local arcade finding bonus levels in the latest coin-op. And when they're not playing games, they're clubbing 'round Manchester's superb nightscape. Not a bad life, eh?

Flanagan and Thomson are currently working on the C64 graphics for *Operation Thunderbolt*. Flanagan is influenced by Japanese art in comics and animated cartoons, "I like the way the mecha are drawn," whereas Thomson, "just gets ideas from me head". Both artists are impressed with Irem, the coin-op manufacturer responsible for *R-Type*, "they've got the best graphics team in the business".

Dutton saw an advert for a software technician in the local Job Centre last year, "I'm a keen games player so I thought it might suit me". As a technical adviser Dutton plays a game as far as he can get, then reports bugs, faults, spelling mistakes, playability and difficulty levels. The programmer sorts out any problems before the game is sent off for duplication. Dutton typically spends between 40-50 hours testing a game. He also answers questions from you, the gamesplayer, on any Ocean title.

All three agree that working for Ocean is brilliant, "it's a terrific atmosphere, you can even have a laugh with the bosses".

RUNNING THE SEGA GAUNTLET



Sega Master Impossible Mission: another visitor, stay a while, stay forever!

US Gold is putting the finishing touches to its first games on the Sega Master console, *Gauntlet* and *Impossible Mission*. Both games are 128K cartridges and have taken about seven months to develop using a custom-made development system.

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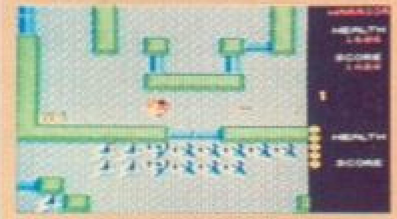
Bob Armour (left) – who's writing Gauntlet on the Atari 7800 console. Tony Porter and Gary Priest (right)

Gauntlet on the Sega is being written by Tony Porter, who also wrote the Spectrum and CPC conversions of this classic coin-op. In fact he used his original source code to write the Sega version. *Gauntlet* is a simultaneous two-player arcade adventure set in a multi-directionally scrolling maze populated with ghosties, demons and an unpleasant character called Death who can only be killed with a magic spell. It's all immense fun with you playing a Wizard, Elf, Warrior or Valkyrie.

Gary Priest is programming Sega *Impossible Mission*, he's using the C64 version as a guideline. He even hopes to imitate the gorgeous sampled sound effects and speech heard in the C64 original. *Impossible Mission* was originally developed by Epyx in the States, and it became something of a C64 classic after its release in 1985. The game is a mixture of puzzle and platform action.



Tengen's Gauntlet coin-op hits the Sega Master courtesy of USG

For those of you interested, here are the tech-specs for the Sega Master console: Z80 at 3.58MHz, 256x192 screen, three sound channels plus noise generation, 64 colour palette, 64 sprites (either 8x8 or 8x16 size) limited to 8 per line, sprites have 15 colours plus transparent, max. 32 colours on-screen at once, 8x8 character blocks, two 16 colour character palettes, hardware assisted horizontal and vertical scrolling, you can horizontally and vertically flip a character, you can set any character above or below sprite priority, plus sprite to sprite collision detection.

ATARI RELEASES £299 ST PACK

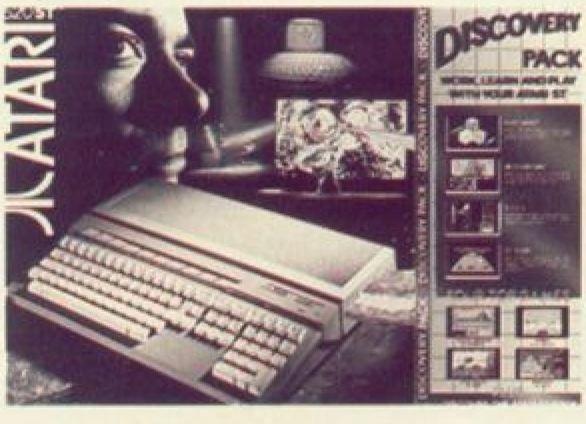
Atari has launched a new bundle package for its popular STFM 16-bit workhorse. The £299.99 Discovery Pack comes with four games – *Carrier Command* (Rainbird), *Outrun* (US Gold), *Space Harrier* and *Bombjack* (Elite), Mandarin's *STOS* games writing language, ST BASIC, *Neochrome* art program, ST Tour disk tutorial and *Discovering Your ST* book.

Bob Gleadow, Atari's UK boss told ACE, "We're aiming the Discovery Pack heavily at the first-time user, in fact we're looking to take some volume from the 8-bit market - £299 is a very affordable price-point."

The Discovery Pack should be in the stores as you read this, the existing £499 STE Power Pack will still continue to be sold. The STE is the enhanced version of the ST featuring improved graphics and sound hardware coupled with greater expansion possibilities.

A full and frank exclusive ACE interview with Bob Gleadow appears on page 10.

A new voyage of ST discovery from Atari



THE ACE DEBATE...

SOFTWARE LICENSING - GOOD OR BAD?

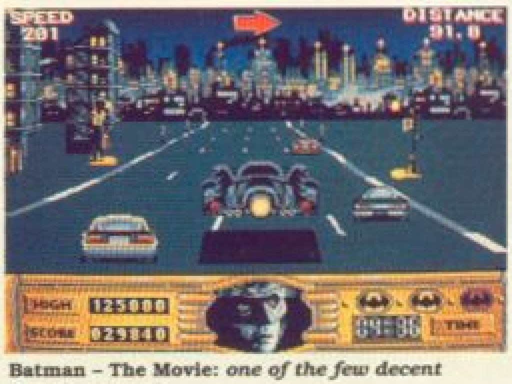
Welcome to a new section in ACE, a section which you are actively encouraged to participate in. Every month we will choose a controversial subject connected with Advanced Computer Entertainment and ask leading industry figures for their opinions on the matter. You will then be offered the chance to contribute to the debate via a telephone vote. The results of which will be printed in the following issue of the magazine. Welcome to the ACE DEBATE.

We've decided to kick off the ACE Debate with a subject that has caused quite a furore in recent months – the subject of software games licensing: where a software company will tie in a game with the latest film, TV show, book or coin-op.

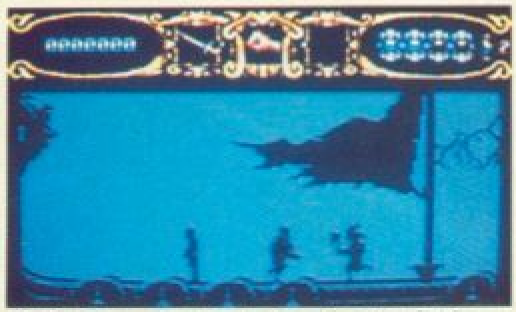
THE CASE FOR

Ocean Software has been one of the most prolific companies in the field of licensing games software. In fact it kicked off the whole idea in 1983, when it gained the official home computer conversion rights to the *Hunchback* coin-op. Since those early days Ocean has produced a variety of licensed games from the mediocre *Knight Rider* and *Street Hawk* to the likes of *Platoon* and *Robocop*. More recently, the firm has enjoyed considerable success with *Batman - The Movie* and *The Untouchables*. Gary Bracey, Software Development Manager at Ocean, explained the benefits of licensed software:

> *"I can't guarantee it will be No.1 16-bit software, but I can guarantee it will be enjoyable for those who buy it. And by putting it out we hope to grow the industry."*
>
> **Peter Bilotta, Managing Director of Mirrorsoft, commenting on his firm's new range of licensed software**



Batman – The Movie: ***one of the few decent licensed games***



Myth: ***Three years to develop, then lost in the sea of licensed games.***

"When you buy a licence for a computer game you purchase a ready made high profile for the game on the back of the marketing of the original product. When Johnny's granny goes into the shop, she asks for *Batman - The Movie* not *F-29 Retaliator* because she's aware of the original Batman film and its associated marketing. There's better impulse buying with licensed games. But you need a game title with quality and a profile. Licensing has been abused by many software companies in the past, although I don't think it has been so much lately. We see the 8-bit market as solely a licence market – they're the only types of games that seem to sell on 8-bit machines. It's difficult to sell an 8-bit product without a licence profile. It's just a question of market trends.

'The disadvantages of software licensing are the huge costs involved, and sometimes you're offered a licence which may not be suitable for conversion to a computer game. In this respect *Platoon* was a very hard game to produce. But the advantages of software licensing speak for themselves, *Robocop* was a computer game on celluloid.

'And there's one final point about licensing that many people forget – computer game licenses don't just borrow sales from the film business – they also borrow glamour, which helps to build our industry. By establishing contacts with the entertainment giants, we're helping to give the games market a more assured future.'

THE CASE AGAINST

Mark Cale is the Managing Director of System 3, a software company that has produced a widely respected collection of original games including *The Last Ninja*, *International Karate* and *IK+*. But as far as Cale is concerned, with software licensing taking over the games market he "might as well give up today"...

"A licensed game is a major impulsive purchase for parents and other relations when buying their kids a game. They've heard of the film, and buy the game on the back of the huge overall marketing spend of the product. Although there's one or two companies producing decent licensed games, most put out bad products. *Batman - The Movie* was one of the few decent licensed games, it was far better than people were expecting. Gary Bracey at Ocean is one of the few people who knows what a good game is. The games market is now being dominated by licensing. It takes us three years to develop an original game like *Myth* – which is generally regarded as being the best original game on any 8-bit format. But *Myth* was one of our lowest selling games ever because it was sold in a market dominated by licensed games.

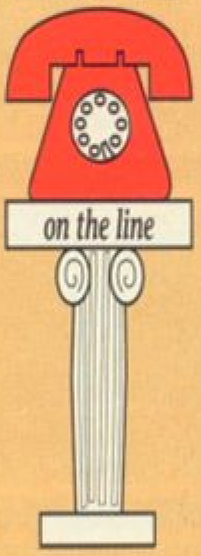
'It's killing the market. It stops innovation. The name is more important than the game. People are being conned. Even programmer's are being exploited because of a lack of money, software companies pay so much for the licence that's there's no cash left to pay programmers royalties on the sales of the game. How many original software houses are left in the market now?

'We will never do a licensed game. I believe in quality and innovation. Every original game must be fun, we try very hard to achieve this. Most people in this industry don't play games, they're just interested in making money, I'm one of the few Managing Directors that does actually enjoy playing games."

> ***"It's killing the market. It stops innovation. The name is more important than the game"***
>
> **Mark Cale, Managing Director, System 3**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ACE



You've read the case for and against software licensing, so what is your opinion on the subject? All you have to do now is pick up the phone, dial a number, and register your vote.

0898 400 788* – "I think software licensing is a good thing and should continue."

or

0898 400 789* – "I think software licensing is ruining the software games industry and should be stopped."

The results of this survey will be announced in a future issue of ACE.

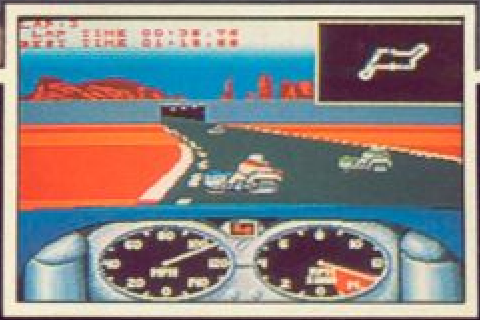
If you want to have a more detailed say on the subject of software licensing then please write to: ACE LICENCE DEBATE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively fax us on 01 490 0991.

Also if you want to see a particular subject debated then write or fax the address and number above.

There are also other subjects which you can vote on, elsewhere in this issue of ACE.

*Calls are charged at 38p per minute peak, and 25p per minute offpeak. Lines are open 24 hours a day.

COMBO RACER™



Combo Racer brings the reality of this amazing sport to your home computer for the first time. Experience the sensation of this one or two player game. Rely on the co-operation of the second player if you dare.

Compete across eight pre-determined courses or utilise the complete construction system to create your own perilous circuits.

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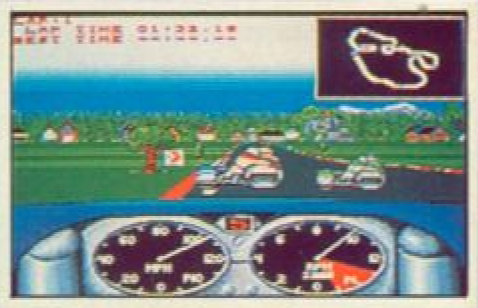

Available on

CBM Amiga and Atari ST.

Screen shots from various versions.

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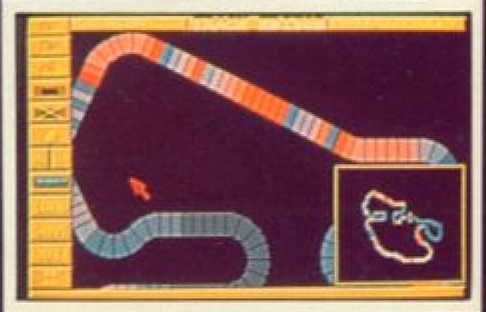

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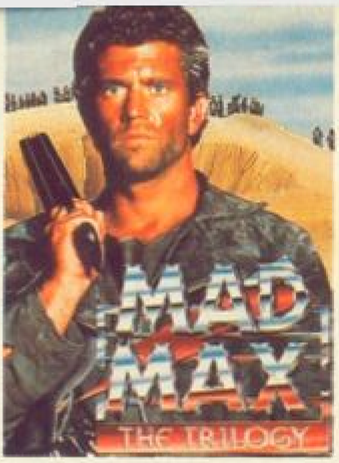
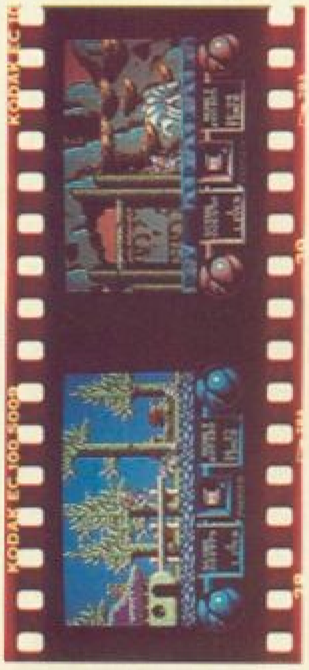
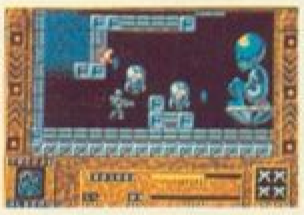
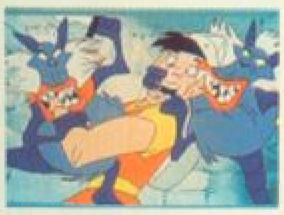
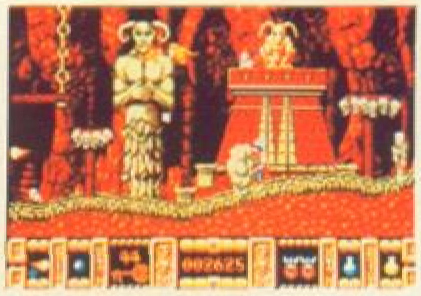
It's a  world! The battle-scarred futuristic road warrior, dressed in leather and steel becomes a multi-format game from MINDSCAPE this Christmas. Mad Max © 1979, Warner Bros, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The main rate of CORPORATION TAX stayed unchanged at 35% in last month's budget.

A delicious  damsel in distress, a programmer called Laurens Van Der Donk, a company that produces the best C64 games in the world... from SYSTEM 3 on C64 and Amiga from May, while Spectrum and ST FLIMBO'S QUEST are on the way.

On April 14th VIRGIN celebrates the 40th anniversary of DAN DARE's debut in the Eagle Comic with the release of  **on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC.**

Lead on brave adventurer, your  awaits. Don Bluth's classic laser-disc adventure hits the Amiga again courtesy of READYSOFT, INC./ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL in DRAGON'S LAIR:ESCAPE FROM SINGES CASTLE priced at £44.95dk.

“In the depths of depravity, you must extinguish the roaring satanic flames of  ”

Expect super sexy Steve Bak screen scrolling, pray for matching gameplay. FIRE AND BRIMSTONE from FIREBIRD on ST/Amiga in May.

Do you feel lucky punk?

This is a the most powerful hand-gun in the world, it can blow your head clean off. Harry Callahan, the toughest cop in the movie-history is out at Xmas from MINDSCAPE on Amiga, ST, PC and Nintendo.

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LETTER BOMBS

YOUR VIEWS ON ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

ULTIMATE ULTIMA

I am writing to congratulate you upon your recent American issue. I was extremely pleased to see not only a review of *Knights of Legend* but also a preview of *Ultima VI* – on the cover no less. The *Ultima* series of games are simply brilliant: in my view *Ultima IV* and *V* are the best games in computing history. I hope that at leat the treu computer role playing game genre will become popular – the *Bards Tale* series, *Forgotten Worlds* series and even *Dungeon Master* were all good games but lacked the essential ingredients of real RPGs: complex interaction with characters. The *Ultima*-style keyword conversations are a formidable attempt at the impossible. CRPG have so much more substance to them than the run-of-the-mill racing, platform or arcade games – the genre deserves to flourish and games like *Ultima* and *Knights* will, undoubtedly, lead the way.

Anyway, I do hope that the 90's will popularise the strategy and role-playing fronts of computing – keep up the good work ACE and Origin. Roll on *Ulitma VII!*

Julius Rich, London

• Hear, hear.

UNEMPLOYED? JOIN THE CLUB...

I would like to set up a user group for unemployed computer enthusiasts. My idea would be to set up a club to cater for all formats from the ST to the C64. Each of the formats would be divided into individual sections run by a small number of dedicated users. If possible these would then set up their own PD and information services. A newsletter would be produced bimonthly including news information from each individual section. I would also hope to include a *Dungeon Master/Chaos Strikes Back* column, users ads, help column and a section for each of the computers.

To set up such a large User Group we would have to make a small charge to members to cover mailing, PD software, putting together and printing of the news letter. Although primarily intended for low income/unemployed users, any person who owns a computer is quite welcome to join (unemployed users will receive special benefits and concessions).

ACE FEEDBACK

PRIZE LETTER

I have been reading your magazine, along with others, for several months now and while the others were not entirely a waste of money they are more than proof enough of the superiority of your magazine, particularly with regard to News. At the end of the Letters page of the 1990 American issue of ACE, you asked us for our views on the burning issues of the day, like CDI, CD-ROM, handhelds, FM Towns, consoles, *Digital Justice*, NEO-GEO, et al. Well, here's mine! I deeply apologise for the extreme length of this letter but remember you asked!!!

To begin with, I do not feel that CDI will be with us, since Philips has futzed and footled about with the launch for so long that companies are likely to say 'screw it', not to mention that Philips have decided, rather foolishly, to position it at the business market – which in turn is not in the slightest bit interested in non-writeable media like CDI, as Tim Mott of Electronic Arts correctly pointed out. I believe therefore that CD-ROM is the front runner in this regard, though not in expensive machines like the Towns, which will be lucky to sell as many units as an Einstein if it ever makes it to our shores The most us Brits can run to is the basic ST & Amiga. You must remember that Japan and America have more disposable income to spend on computers than we do, not to mention the fact that in America there are literally thousands of computer companies & dealers competing with each other This means that the choice of product there is extensive and quite cheap. Who in this country would call the Macintosh a home machine? In America it is.

Over here I feel the biggest CD-ROM company will be NEC and its PC Engine – if they decide to sell it here – but generally I think it will be a great deal longer than you think before we are playing with CD machines & software that are reasonable in price and exploit the technology to the fullest, I believe it will be 10 years before we are (£30-£70 for Towns games is NOT reasonable!). In short, the price of CD hard & software has got to come right down. Sorry, Blit, it looks like you won't be junking your ST & Amiga just yet!

I am more optimistic about the future of consoles, although SNK are immediately in last place if they are going to sell their console at £300 and cartridges at £130, since you can buy your own computer for that, although 40-megabit carts are not to be sniffed at. The price point every console maker should reach for is £150, any more than that and you are encroaching on computer territory – I find that this country is lingering on memories of cheap VCS machines!

Also, another point to make is that, so far, the stuff for the Megadrive & the Engine have been mostly excellent, largely thanks to some masterly Japanese programming, and, especially more important, some extremely tough playtesting. Now that America and, very soon, Europe are entering the Super-Console equation, can we expect their releases to be as good as the Japanese? Again, in my opinion, no largely because we do not playtest to the same exacting degree as the Japanese, and when you think about it, we do not have their consistently high programming standards across the board. Think about it, you go around any European & American company and compare their standards of coding and playtesting with the Japanese and you'll see what I mean. Now, I am not saying that we and the Yanks will not produce some mean feats of programming on the Megadrive & Engine that will be as good, if not better, than them (originality is our strongest suit), it's just that I believe that the Japanese will produce such marvels a little more often than us, thus ensuring that they remain the cutting edge of Super-Consoles.

Pepe Moreno's *Digital Justice* computer comic sounds promising, although you did not elaborate on the play aspects of the product itself very much. To me, this sounds much more desirable than wasting time and money on the elusive computer movie. This is a path that requires further investigation – thou' you are looking at one hefty bill for *Digital Justice*! Still, my congrats to Senor Moreno for such a wonderful concept. Lucasfilm & Cosmic Osmo – eat your heart out!

James McLean, Cambuslang, Glasgow

• Blitter replies: First, Philips are releasing a home version of CD-I in 1991 (see AIM article in this issue) and they are currently putting big bucks behind home entertainment programs. It was DVI that was business oriented. Second, remember how long it took for VCR's to achieve mass sales? Not as long as ten years, and the original entry level price was a lot higher in real terms than CD-I will be. ACE will be carrying its first proper CD-ROM review next month, and we expect to be printing them regularly within two years.

My main aims in wanting to set up this club are:

(1) To help generate contact between computer users regardless of the type of computer they use.

(2) To help dispel the "My computer is better than yours" syndrome.

(3) To promote home computing/computers as useful tools in every day life and not just for playing games on.

(4) To make like a little easier for unemployed/low income users, encourage involvement in their club, negotiate the best deals from software/PD houses and encourage the manufacturers to give better support to the users and their computers.

(5) Encourage members to put their computing skills to good use by holding competitions to produce programs. Providing information regarding courses. Providing any help required for learning new skills and extra development of existing ones. Providing users with the latest information regarding equipment and software.

(6) Help stamp out the destruction of data/discs by viruses – informing users of the dangers of these rouge programs, precautions that can be taken and setting up a virus checking/killing service.

(7) Make available PD software for as many of the formats catered for as possible. Distributing it as easily and as cheaply as possible.

If any of your readers would like more information or would like to join this club please do not hesitate to write or phone.

Paul Matthews,
2/6 West Pilton Crossway,
Edinburgh, Scotland EH4 4ED.
Telephone: 031 332 2296.

• *We wish you luck with your new venture, Paul, but please make sure you club doesn't get misused by software pirates. In the meantime we will be sending you some C64 and ST games to help get you started.*

PRAISE IN THE NEWSAGENTS

Last month whilst browsing through the magazines in my local newsagent, I picked up a copy of ACE. I was very impressed, especially with TNT. This and the general high standard of the reviews and other features persuaded me to buy your magazine. If ACE remains as good as issue 30, you'll have a permanent reader on your hands. Well done and keep it up.

AJ Kilby, Melton Mawbray, Leics

• *Thank you very much, welcome to the ACE club! Why don't you subscribe to the magazine?*

PLAY IT SOMETIME SAM

Is there any chance that you will be reviewing the MGT Sam Coupé? Is there going to be much software written for it, and when will they get into the shops?

Michael Brannan, Biddenham, Beds

• *See pages 27 and 28 in this issue for an in-depth look at the SAM Coupé. As far as software is concerned there are two sources. Firstly you can run about 75 to 80% of existing and new Spectrum releases. Secondly there is a small amount of SAM specific software being written at the moment, and more will be developed by MGT themselves and one or two other software houses. But don't expect to see a rush of software for some time – the major software companies are not going to commit themselves until sales of the machine take off.*

TNT FOR THE INTELLIGENT

I am pleased to see that recently TNT has been moving away from cheat modes to more thoughtful and intelligent game solutions. In particular, the in-depth article on *Battletech* last year, and more recently the pieces on *Batman – The Movie* and *Chaos Strikes Back* have been worthy of special praise. ACE is catering for its thinking readership. The detailed solutions offered so far have been excellent, and for my part, I would like to urge you to include more such pieces in what for me, is still the magazine of the year!

TP Mowat, Lipson, Plymouth

• *Gosh, what can we say? Thanks!*

PAIRED PC PROBLEMS

I am very pleased to see that you are trying to promote the PC. But I have one small complaint. When a PC version is reviewed the computer used is a 386 with VGA and a sound card. This sort of computer is very good but also very expensive. Most people have a 286 PC with EGA and no sound card. If the machine used has better graphics, is faster, and excellent sound it is really a different machine. Therefore you are not reviewing a PC game, you are reviewing something else. I would prefer (and so would many other people) if you would review games using an average PC computer.

Matthew Braton
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands

Dear migraine maker, why do you insist in causing a great pain in my head every month? Although I admit your magazine is the best computer magazine in Smiths, I get constantly peeved at the lack of detail when you review PC games. Unfortunately not all of the public own hot 386 VGA hard disk machine for which it seems you review all your PC games on.

Brett Stansfield, Otley, W. Yorkshire

• *ACE promotes all aspects of Advanced Computer Entertainment. As far as PC games reviews are concerned, we play every game on several different models and system set-ups of PC including 286 at 8MHz, 386 at 16MHz, 386 at 24MHz, CGA/EGA/VGA/MCGA graphics modes, no sound card, Adlib and Roland sound card. We usually print only EGA or VGA screenshots because of a lack of space on the page.*

MISLEADING PACKAGING

I would like to complain about something most software houses are guilty of – screen-shots on the back of games packaging. When I buy a game for my C64, I don't want to see the graphics of the Amiga or ST. I want to see them for my 64. Sometimes I see a game with Amiga screen-shots that look great but when I load it up the graphics are nothing like it. *Kick Off* is a classic example. Great on the Amiga, not so good on the C64.

Alex Wolstenholme, Rugby, Warks

• *Perhaps software companies would like to explain? You know our address and fax number…*

GOLDEN HELP

In the April issue of your wonderful magazine, I noticed DA Edge wants a copy of *Eagle Empire*. I have a compilation of Alligata games, *Chartbuster*, with five games on. It is unused, and contains *Blagger, Eagle Empire, Killer Watt, Panic Planet* and *Bug Blaster*. If Mr Edge would like this, I would be prepared to sell it to him for £1.50 to cover postage and packing, and send it by return of post if I hear from him.

Mrs H Miller, 17 Sheridan Road, Manor Park, London E12 6QT.

• *Ah, it's good to see our readers help eachother.*

MEGA WEGA ISSUE

Please, please, let's have some more Mega Wega ACE issues like No.27.

Glenn Walker, Skellingthorpe, Lincoln

• *We always try to wega our mega, we wouldn't have it any other way.*

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Armed with the facts in your April edition that the game *Omega* (for the Amiga) was Out Now, I trooped down to my software dealer and asked for a copy. They fell about laughing. I said it must be out, ACE magazine says so! They rolled around the floor. I said alright, alright, I get the message, instead I'll have *Conquerer*, or *Their Finest Hour*, or *Tower of Babel* – you should have them, ACE said they were all February releases. After the hoots of derision had diminshed somewhat, they wiped their eyes, and made me promise to return soon, as they hadn't had so much fun for ages.

OK! I know! We can't blame you. You only print the info given to you by whoever. You're as pure as the driven snow in *Midwinter*, and I don't intend to hold my breath for that release either. It seems to me that we punters (games buyers) have been putting up with this situation literally for years, and it is time that the system was brought back into the realms of sanity and reality.

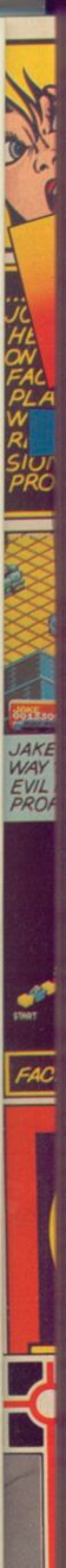
After all, if I read a film or video review, I can almost guarantee that the goods are available, and the same applies for books and records. It makes little sense to print a review of a computer game that won't emerge until 2 to 4 months later. By that time, most buyers will have forgotten about it, and purchased an item that is out on time, and so the software houses lose custom. Serve them right.

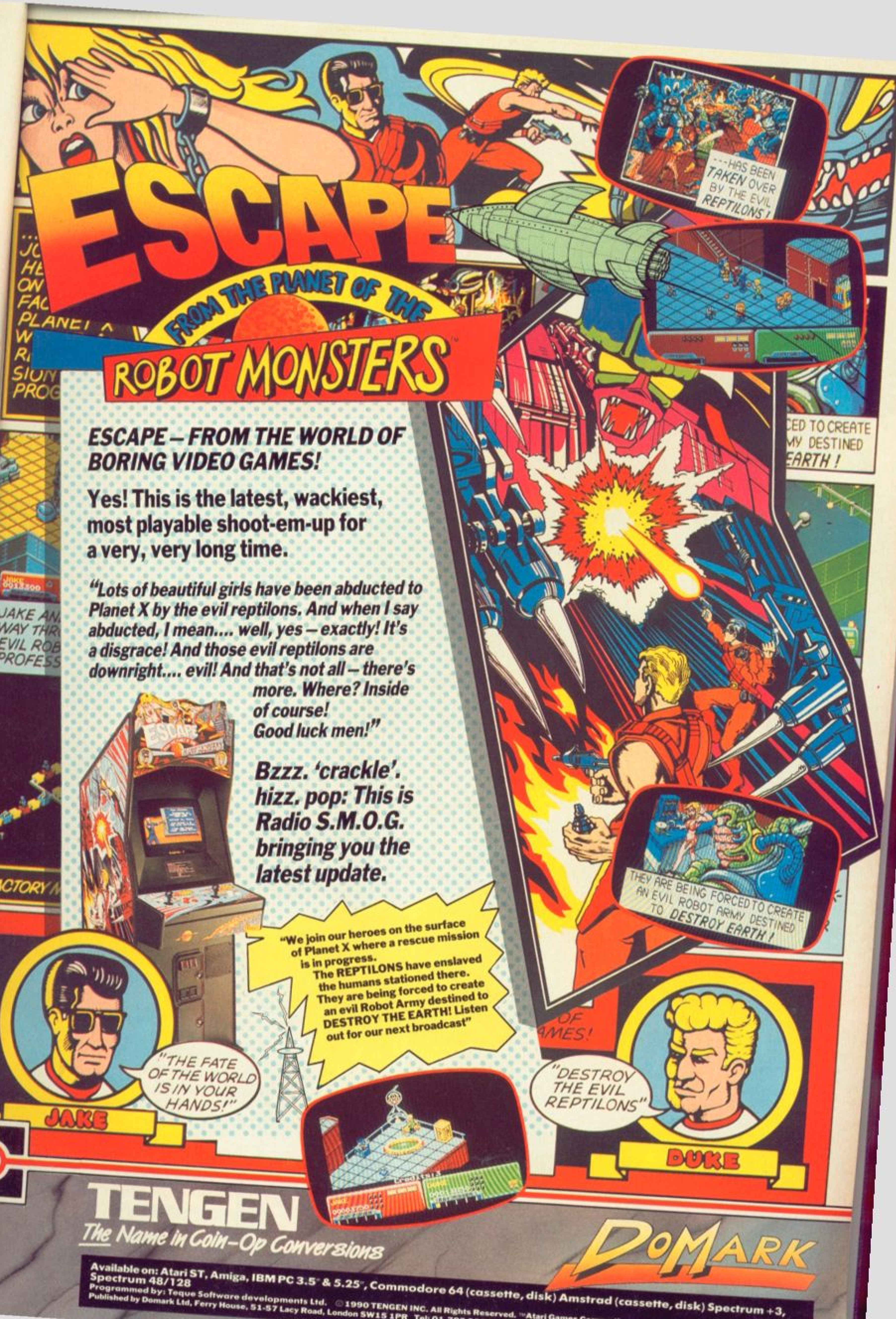
The present system only exists because we the punters allow it to do so. Perhaps it is time that we all woke and realised that ours is the only arm of the entertainment industry that promises goodies in the form of adverts, previews, and reviews, that in most instances, it is not yet ready to supply.

Finally, to show that I can contribute as well as complain, here is a useful cheat for *Fighter Bomber* (Amiga Version). When the 'Select Pilot' screen appears, enter the following No.: 448944895554. After pressing [RETURN], you can access any mission.

Tony Melling, Hyde, Cheshire

• *We do print the release information in good faith. It's up to the software company to live up to your expectations, although it is easy for release dates to slip.*





---HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE EVIL REPTILONS!
...JO HE ON FAC PLANET X W R SION PROG
CED TO CREATE MY DESTINED EARTH!
JAKE 0013300
JAKE AN WAY THRO EVIL ROB PROFESS
FACTORY M
START
THEY ARE BEING FORCED TO CREATE AN EVIL ROBOT ARMY DESTINED TO DESTROY EARTH!
OF AMES!
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ESCAPE – FROM THE WORLD OF BORING VIDEO GAMES!

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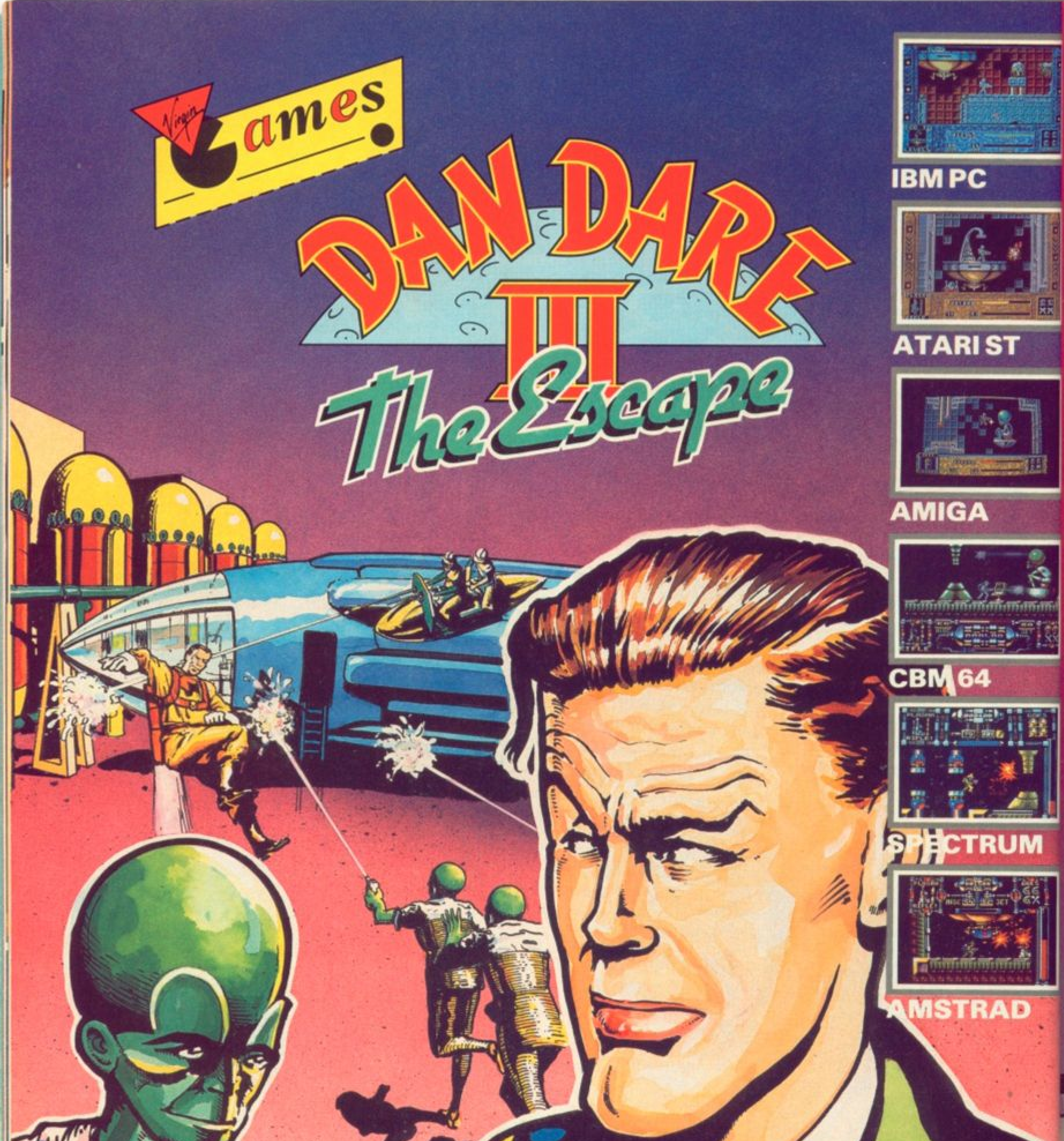
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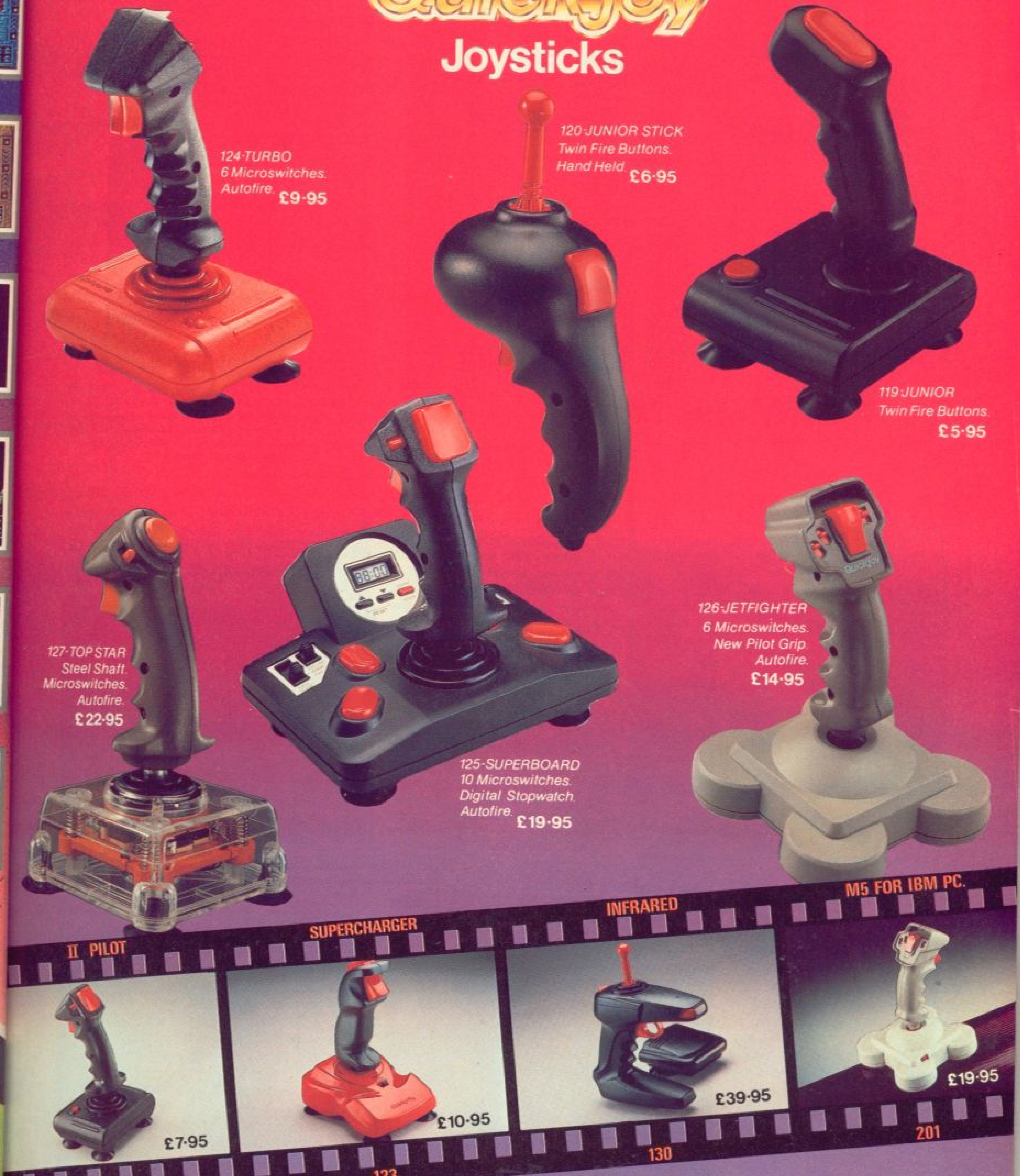
Joysticks



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LORD of the SKIES

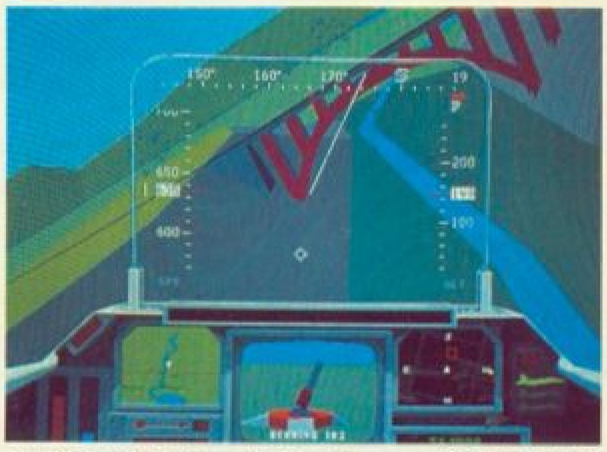
Microprose have designed the ultimate flight simulator computer. Destined for the coin-op market today, it could be in your home tomorrow...

Microprose boss Wild Bill Stealey watched six million copies of his company's games fly off the shelves... and decided that wasn't enough.

The games were OK, he reckoned, but the machines they were playing on just weren't up to scratch. He wanted a machine powerful enough to take games like *F15 Combat Pilot* and *Gunship* into another dimension altogether, a machine that would rival commercial flight simulators in power and graphic capabilities, a machine that would really give gamesters a taste of high speed sky-storming.

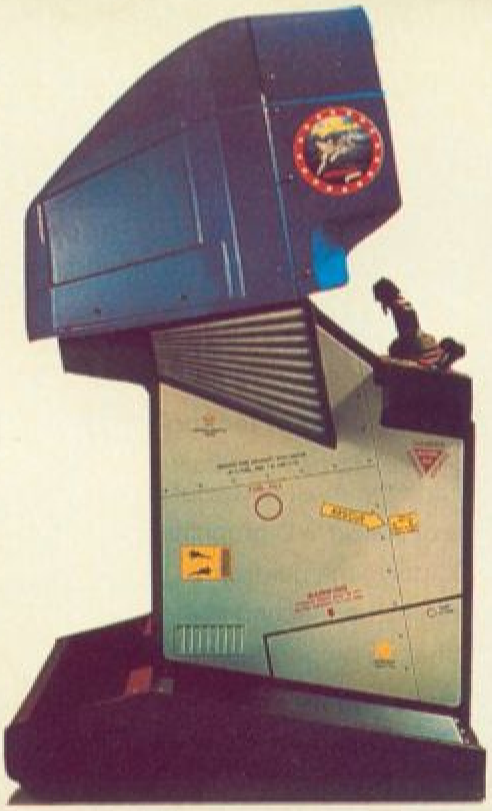
So Wild Bill sallied forth and recruited Gene Lipkin, co-founder (with Nolan Bushnell) of Atari. Together with a group of techno-boffins, Lipkin promised the Flying Fortress that they would give him his machine – with knobs on, and a slot for nickels and dimes. Microprose were going to take off into the coin-op business and tackle the likes of Konami and SNK. War was declared in 1988 and the company got down to some serious hardware designing...

Two years later, and the machine is ready for shipping. It's a neat, upright cabinet with a three button joystick and a one-button thrust lever. It's powered by a 68000 linked up to other, more powerful beasts (which Microprose designed themselves and are currently keeping quiet about) and the firmware wields some of the most efficient 3D vector graphics routines around. The result is a blistering combat flight sim with some very novel features. Here's the pitch...



Location indicator *Target ID* *Threat Display*

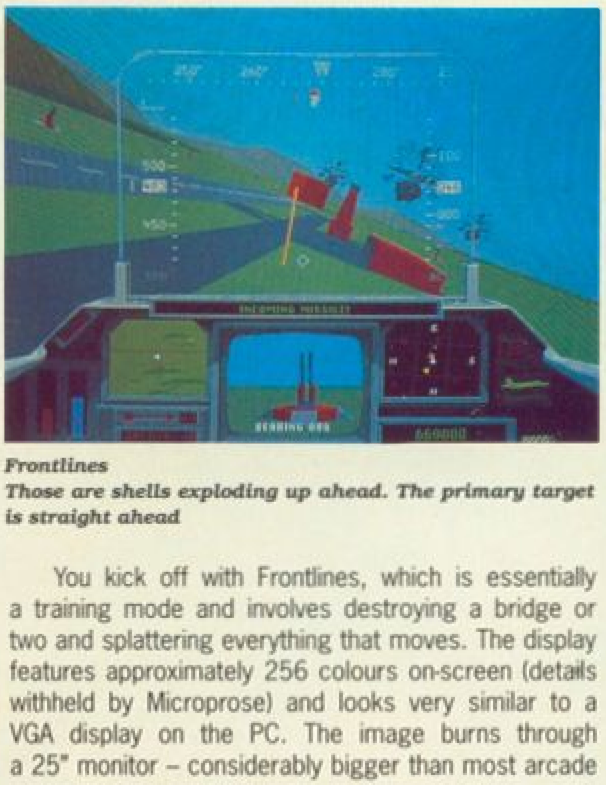
Training Mission (Frontlines).
Banking down the valley at high speed to blast a bridge. Flying down canyons is particularly exhilarating. The small P in the top right hand corner of the HUD indicates the direction of the Primary Target which you must destroy to complete the mission



The F15 cabinet is currently upright only, but a sit-down version may be released later. Other games are bound to follow if the system succeeds, with conversions of Microprose's home computer titles coming first and dedicated games titles following on later

MACH 2 AND RISING

The current scenario implemented on the machine is a version of *F15 Combat Pilot*. It's been especially designed for coin-operation with six selectable missions of varying difficulty. The first two of these you can choose between when you start play – the other four have to be earned.



Frontlines
Those are shells exploding up ahead. The primary target is straight ahead

You kick off with Frontlines, which is essentially a training mode and involves destroying a bridge or two and splattering everything that moves. The display features approximately 256 colours on-screen (details withheld by Microprose) and looks very similar to a VGA display on the PC. The image burns through a 25" monitor – considerably bigger than most arcade consoles. The real difference, however, is in the speed.

Pushing down on the stick sends you into a mind-blowing dive towards the ground. Terrain details are better than anything currently on the market and you can find yourself skimming the ground and – in the second mission – streaking between the pillars of the oil-rig platforms in the Gulf.

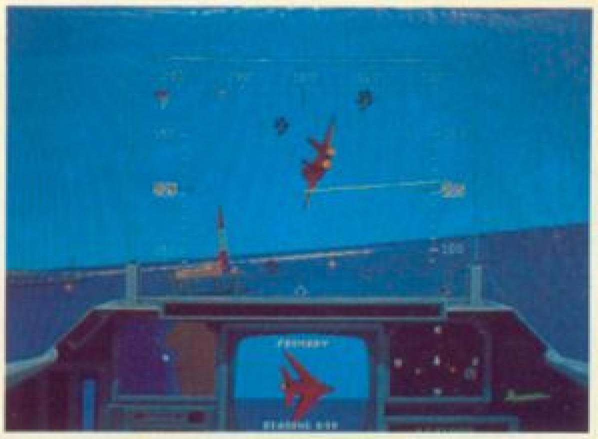
In Mission Three you're on night patrol. The sound is almost as aggressive as the action and you can flick your craft into all the traditional dog-fighting manoeuvres. The only difference is the skill required – at this speed and with no auto-pilot or computed assistance you are really up against it.

Mission Four ('the Angry Sea') blasts you out over the oceans and Mission Five finally delivers the body blow with air-to-air combat. Mission Six is Top Secret and cannot be previewed – you have to earn your wings before you can aspire to this specially constructed level that features increased flying difficulty and more aggressive opponents.

To give you some idea of the pace of this game, you should realise that a typical high-speed PC flight sim is going to handle around 1500 polygons a second. *F15* coin-op delivers 60000. That's way ahead of any other coin-operated mechanism and the frame update rate is a staggering 30 frames a second – even faster than commercial TV and cinema. So the action isn't only fast, it's superbly smooth as well.

DIMES FOR DEATH

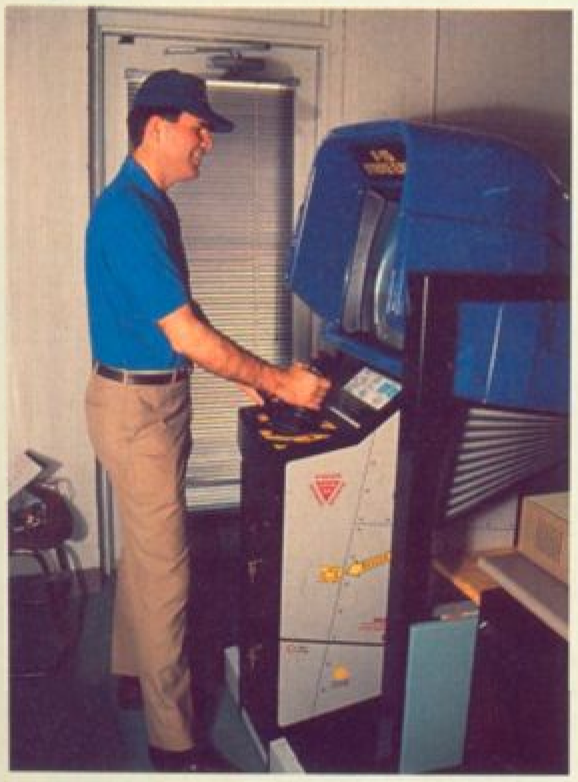
Just how much firepower should you get for a dollar? That was the question Microprose were struggling with when we visited them in Baltimore. Decoys and fuel are essential and could therefore come pretty cheap – but what price afterburners? Let's hope the game doesn't end up being the most expensive to play as well as the most exciting...



Gulf Mission
Dogfighting over the Gulf – 'It's just the Gulf,' insists Wild Bill, 'I never mentioned Lybya, did I?' We've just got time to buy him the farm before flipping down to sea level to pass underneath that drilling platform in a low altitude victory roll

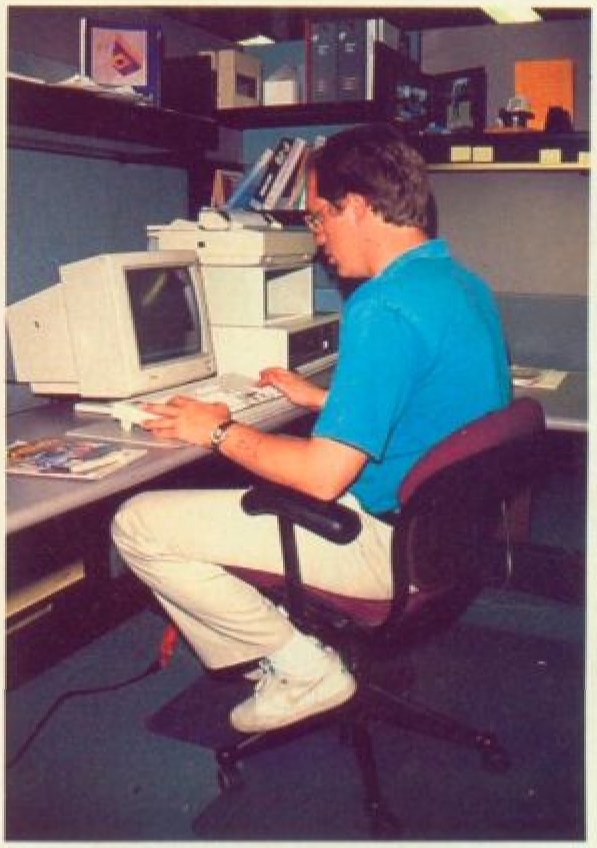
TACTICS

F15 isn't just a blast-em-up, however. First, unlike any other coin-op, you have the freedom to choose your own flight path in any direction. You have to keep a constant eye on your fuel gauge, which can only be replenished by blasting fuel trucks on land. You also have to check target locations and make continuous use of the long-range target identification window, the mini-map display, and the threat indicator.

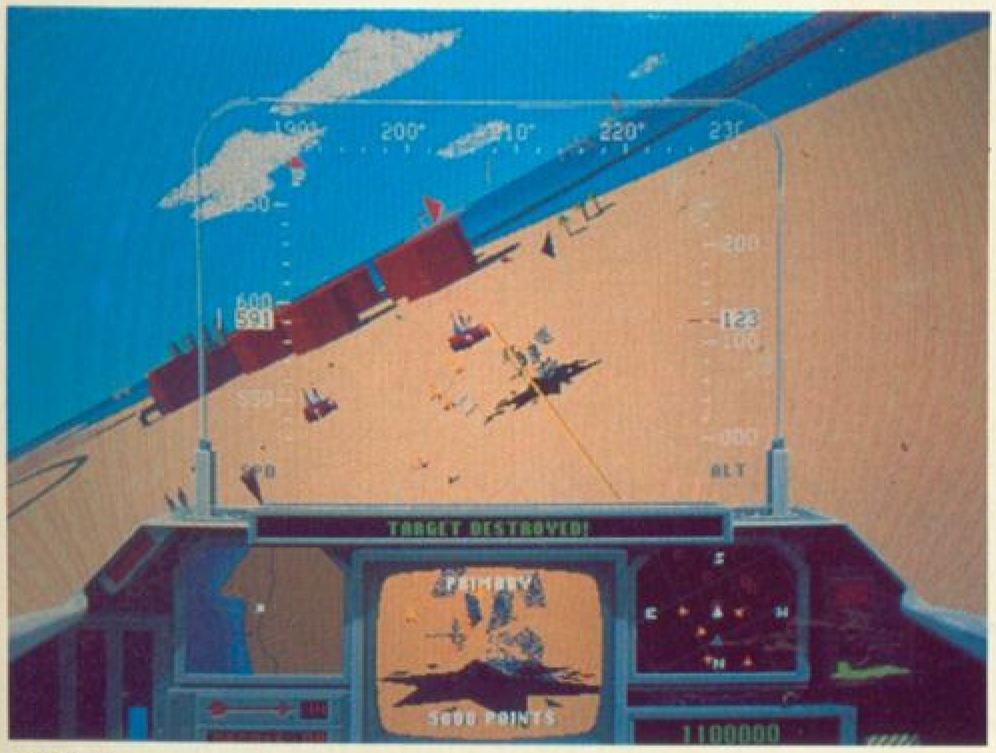


Wild Bill testing the new system. His shouts of glee echoed all round the building as staff cowered out of sight. He insisted on wearing his cap before taking off...

"Yeee Hooo!!"
'Wild Bill' Stealey



One of the coin-op software engineers working on 3D systems for the game. Code for the system is developed in C before being finally implemented on Microprose's custom chips that handle the graphics and sound



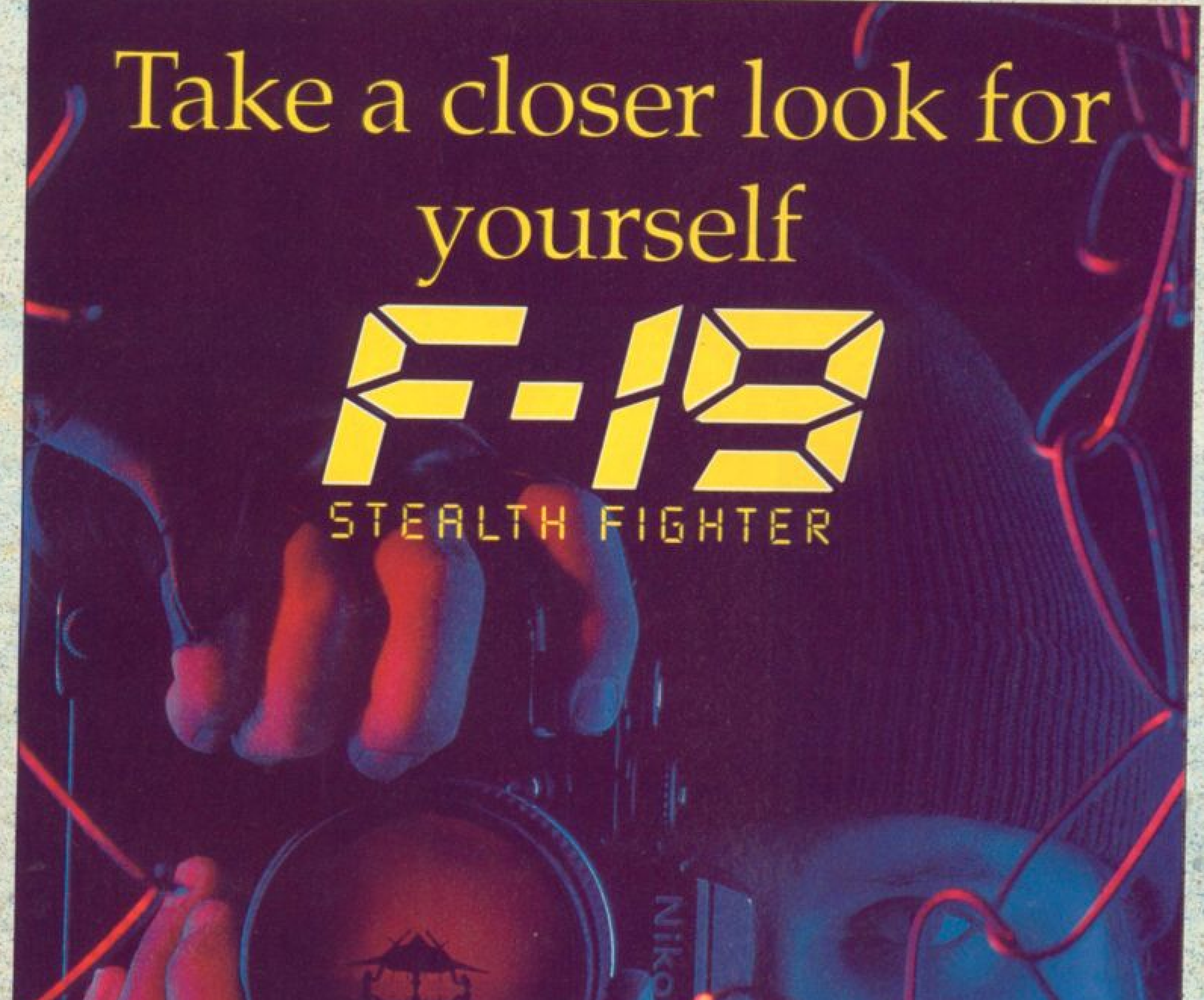
Gulf Mission
Your shells spit fire into the sand below as you wing out towards the sea in the second scenario. The Target ID shows that your missiles have just homed onto and destroyed the Primary Target: 5000 points up and time to find the Portal to exit to the next scenario and upgrade your firepower

F15 has another first up its sleeve. You can actually purchase power-ups by inserting more coins rather than having to earn them. Some features are essential – particularly decoys to get guided missiles off your track. You can repair damage, refuel, add decoys, and boost power – all by inserting more coins or earning extra points.

Once you've finished your mission you can carry on the conflict against anyone who dares to come up against you – or you can head for the spinning portal in the sky. This is a large transparent cuboid structure that, once entered, propels you to the next mission.

NEXT PLEASE

One of the best things about the Microprose engine is that it can be instantly converted to run other scenarios using a simple plug-in chip set. Microprose have three titles ready to implement on the system and although they're not telling what they are, we are prepared to bet that *Gunship* will be one of the first. And a version of *M1 Tank* seems a possibility as well.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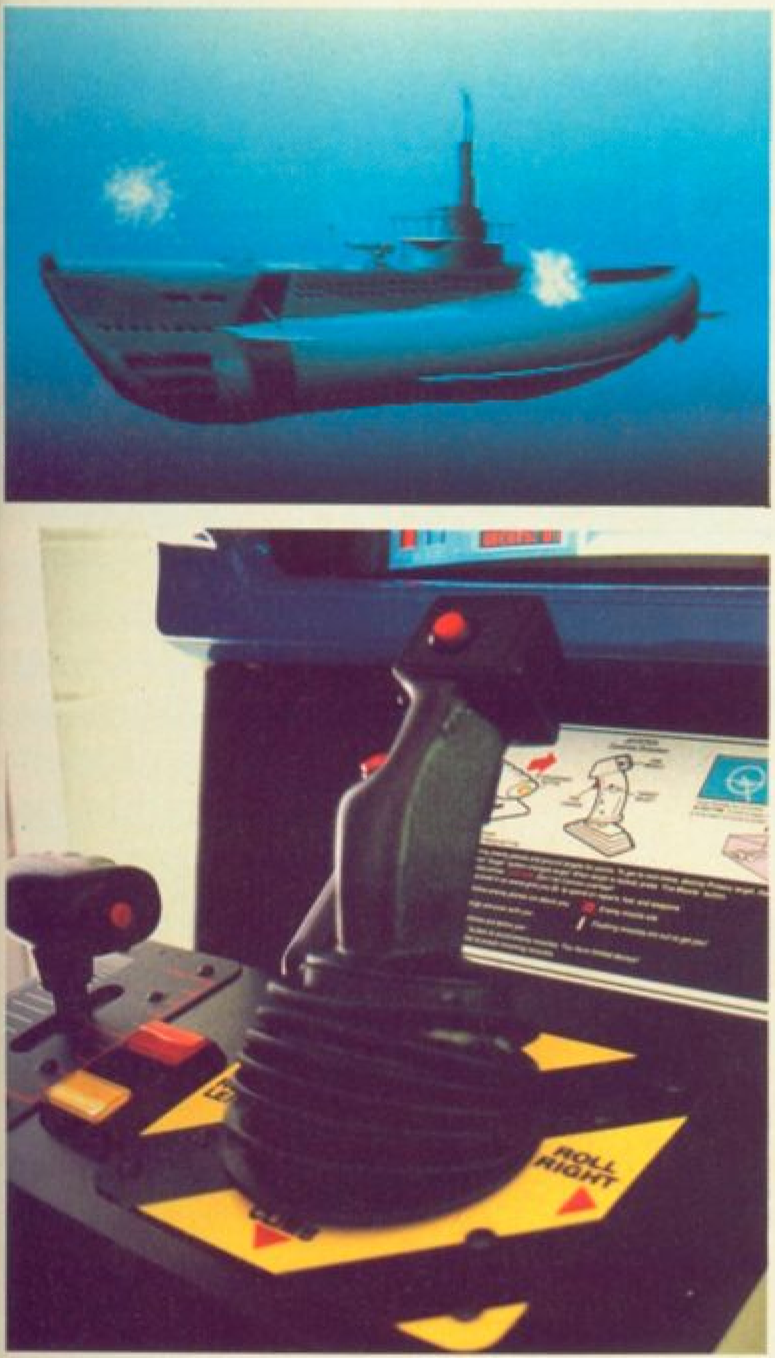


Top: Silent Service II - out soon on PC, and a candidate for coin-op conversion? Bottom: Controls on the coin-op are simple and easy to use. Joystick houses fire button, target lock-on, and missile fire switch; thrust control on the left also houses afterburner. Decoy release button is on fascia. Joystick control is very sensitive - this is no sluggish 16-bit flight sim, this is FAST

The implications of all this are pretty staggering. First, if Microprose succeed in this venture – and recent reception at a US trade show indicates that this is very probable – then they can expect to sell around 5000 units. At just over $7000 dollars apiece that's a lot of money.

'We can use that money to fund new projects,' pointed out Marketing Manager Gerry Blair, 'The big thing is that we are no longer in the software business. We are now an entertainment business. And that means we can develop games using new technology and design them as other people would design movies. We're already in discussion about the implementation of CD-I and, if the coin-op succeeds, we may even have sufficient financial clout to become one of the favoured Nintendo licensees (Nintendo charge a heavy premium for companies wanting to develop directly for the console). And finally, we may soon be in a position to offer our own coin-op licenses.'

Other possibilities under discussion are the development of a home version of the new system and a sit-down cabinet version, the latter not being too popular in the States because of the limited space at many arcade sites. 'The US industry is looking for a US company to do well in this market,' says Gerry, 'because hitherto it's been dominated by the Japanese. The whole of America is rooting for us to be successful.' We're keeping our fingers crossed too.

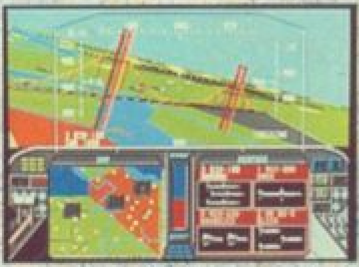
> *"People in the arcade industry used to look at home computer software and see it as their enemy; when we showed them F15 and Tank they changed their minds..."*
>
> **Gerry Blair, Microprose**

Amazing 3 Dimensional Graphics

F-19

STEALTH FIGHTER

Take a closer look for yourself

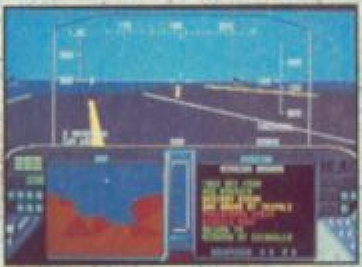


The Air Force can't talk about it, but MicroProse lets you fly it. It's the fighter that radar doesn't see.

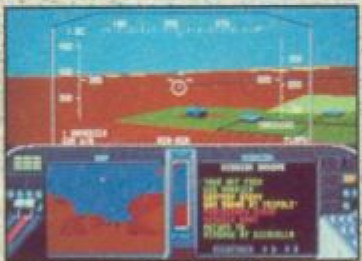
Too bad for radar. For human eyes, F19 is a visual feast. The graphics are so real you'll want to reach out and touch the sky. You might flinch when other planes roar past only metres away. Pull the sweetest, smoothest turns you've ever flown and gaze in admiration at the incredible detail of targets and terrain below.

And what about game play? We've got that covered too. Fly a virtually limitless range of secret missions in four strategic regions of the world. Learn the tricks of keeping an electro-magnetic profile too low for radar to detect. And then watch what you can do with it!

F19 Stealth Fighter. Available for your IBM PC/Tandy/Compatibles. Supports VGA/MCGA, EGA,Tandy, CGA and Hercules grapics. Hard disk installation. Availble on 3-1/2 and 5-1/4 inch disk.



Available for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga.



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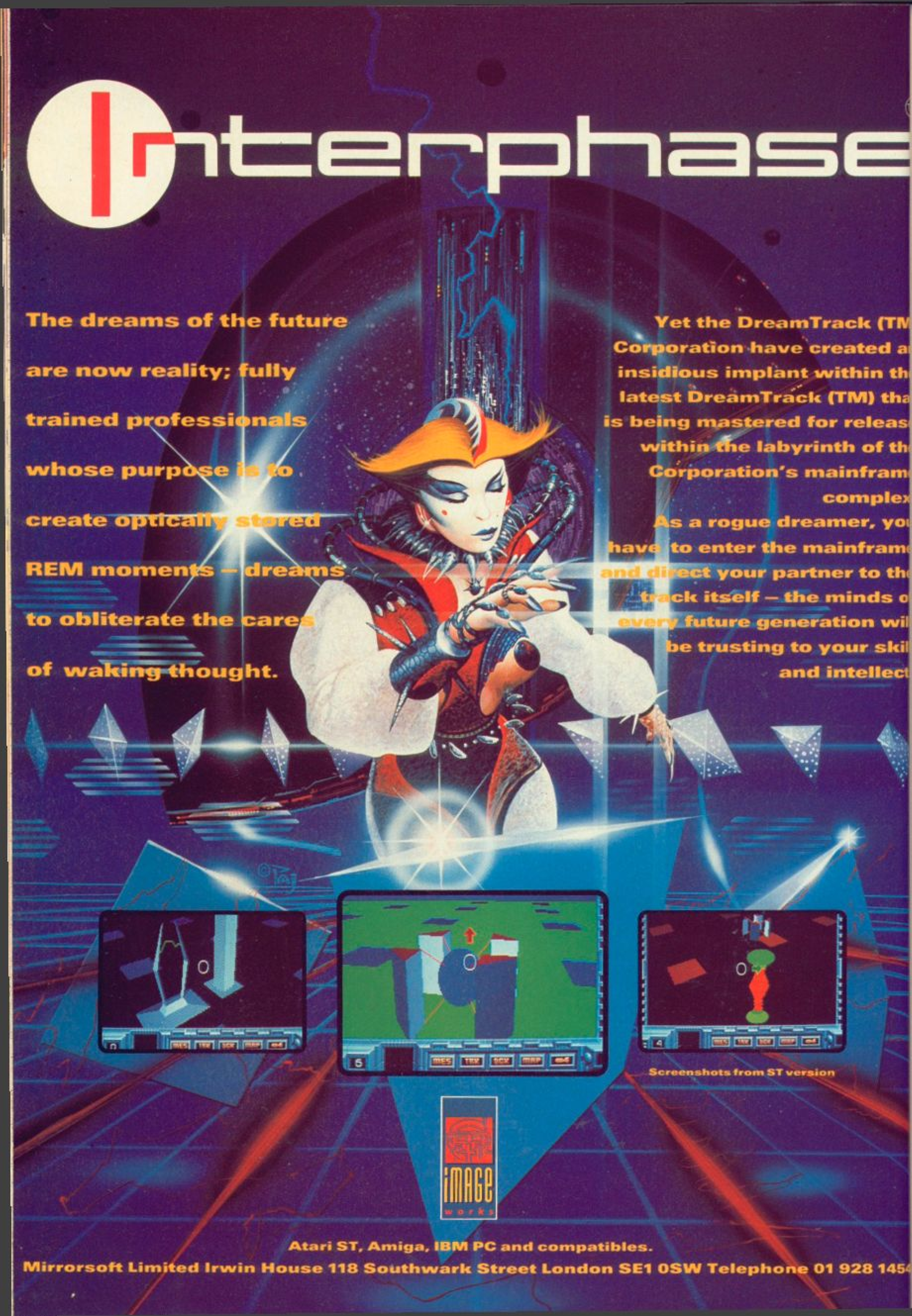

Screenshots from ST version

image works

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HOLLYWOOD Interactive

CD-I is due for launch in exactly a year's time. If AIM's development program is anything to go by, there's going to be no shortage of entertainment software for it when it arrives. Nicola Broad and Jay Sacks report from Los Angeles...

The view from AIM's offices: the famous Hollywood sign is on the hills in the distance on the left.

CD-I is now just around the corner. Only problem is, when we get the machines what are we going to use them for? If gamesplayers know one thing about the hardware market, it's that a machine without good entertainment software is about as useful as a pocket calculator. So where are all these great interactive CD games going to come from?

American Interactive Media, that's where. AIM is the software arm of Polygram Records, a subsidiary of Philips. It was created for the sole purpose of developing and marketing software for CD-I, as defined by the standards agreed upon by Philips and Sony, (see Ace 24).

AIM has spent the last four years drumming up enough software in the $20 to $50 range to make certain that when CD-I hits the American market in early 1991, (and the UK three months later), we'll have games coming out of ears. And not just typical computer game titles either, but a whole host of entertainment programs that could make many video games look like stone age drawings.

Part of the attraction of CD-I is that the technology positively encourages innovation. People buy a new machine because they are inspired by what it can do, and AIM has deliberately spread the software net as wide as possible so that it will ensnare Joe Public, Jenny Public and even Public junior. That way when CD-I comes out the Public family is sure to want one.

NAME DROPPING

According to Emiel Petrone, AIM's Senior Vice President of Sales and Distribution, one vital ingredient in their recipe for success is the type of companies that they are associated with.

"They are already recognized names in their own fields," he told us. The list includes: Time Life Books, Parker Brothers (AIM is currently producing a CD-I version of Parker Bros' *Clue*), ABC Sports, Hanna-Barbera Home Videos to name just a few. They are contributing to AIM's pot-pourri of software, each one trying to grab the public's interest and get people to play. The play element is vital – "CD-I is primarily entertaining," Petrone told us, "and the educational possibilites are tremendous because we've made it into a game."

With the type of resources they have got, AIM should come up with some good gaming material. Petrone has high hopes for *Space Lords*, a title that is being worked on by Spinnaker (already well-known in the US games market and currently co-producing a new Lord of the Rings game with Beam Software for Mirrorsoft) and will be ready in time for the launch.

Space Lords uses a mixture of animation and claymation with dazzling graphics and, of course, CD quality music. Players can explore nine different planets in a space cruiser outfitted with shields, missiles, scanners, computers and repair androids. There is the opportunity to converse with two hundred different characters in two hundred and fifty different locations and, if necessary, fight them with lasers, swords or karate.

Space Lord sounds like a fairly typical computer game, that is simply making better use of new technology. However, it's when you play CD-I titles like *Sesame St.* and *Treasures of the Smithsonian* that you are able to get some idea of the extraordinary dimensions that the system can bring to gaming technology. It's hard to get across in words without sounding corny, but you really do begin to feel like you are actually there.

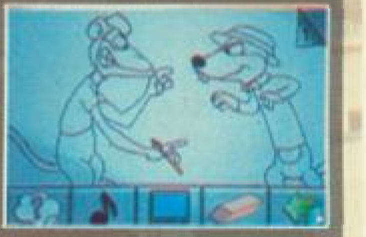
For example, in *The Palm Springs Golf Open/ ABC Sports*, the viewer chooses which famous Palm Springs course to play on. He then sees a panoramic video of the course, pauses to select a club and designate the direction of his ball. One click of the mouse and he sees a live player play his shot exactly as he described it. Sound effects include the public cheering (or booing!) and the recognizable voice of an ABC sports commentator who narrates your play.

THE FUTURE

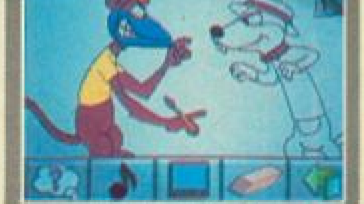
Sarina Simon, AIM's Vice President of Product Development gave us her opinion on the future of CD-I games:

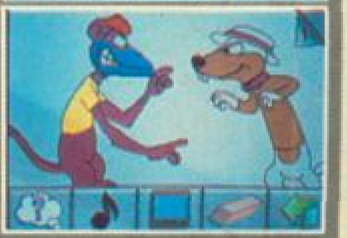
"There is a blur of sameness in the gaming market at present," she told us. "Our challenge is to develop products to really turn that around."

Simon is the mother of two daughters, aged seven and nine. When we asked her why girls don't



In AIM's Children's Coloring Book *is a good example of how CD-I mixes video and computer technology. Kids are presented with an entertaining animation complete with CD quality sound – but with the flick of a mouse the viewer can freeze the action, choose colours from the top of the screen and paint the characters according to his palette. When the action begins again the characters will assume their new colours. FMV (see box on next page) will mean that similar editing and interactive facilities could soon be applied to real-life video.*





have their fair slice of the game-playing pie, she mentioned the abundance of militaristic and shoot 'em up titles which often leave females cold. However she thinks that CD-I will produce some really different options. "Unlike simply watching animations," Simon told us, "interactive game-playing gives you an intimate relationship with the characters." Right now AIM is working on a dating game that will lure teenage girls into the CD-I camp.

Simon also thinks that the easy-to-operate equipment will be a major plus for the CD-I: "If you're a kid with limited dollars you will want one machine that will work well. One big priority about a game is to get it up and running without reading a lot of instructions."

Simon is just one of the team of top notch people that AIM has assembled. The executives are all experts in their fields which include arts, entertainment and education./ Gordon Stulberg's impressive biography includes a term as President of Twentieth Century Fox.

Gordon Stulberg in front some of his artwork, an assortment of paint tube paintings by the Southern Californian artist Peter Shire.

Bernard Luskin, AIM's President and Chief Operating Officer is a distinguished academic and expert in the field of education. Simon has had considerable experience in writing and publishing as well as having been an Executive Producer for Disney. Mark Fein, also on the development team, has an extensive background in A and R from the years that he has spent with music companies. Emiel Petrone played a leading role in promoting the compact disc industry in the States. He formed the Compact Disc Group to launch that new phenomena and is now involved with the Laser Disc Assoc., to assure that CD-I has the same success.

"No other company is doing CD-I software in the U.S.," he told us, "We're the pioneers. But we're not planning on keeping it that way!"

FMV – WHEN THINGS REALLY START MOVING

Previously thought to be a drawback of CD-I format was the fifty per cent video screen due to the data processing limitations of the disc itself. However, new advances in the area of data compression have led Petrone to state that this is a thing of the past.

"We have now technologically broken through the barrier so we can have full screen full motion video," he told us. The prospects look good for CDI with full-screen, full- motion video (FMV) capability. The data rate recommended for full-screen FMV is 1.2 megabits per second - approximately 150 kilobytes per second - which is well within the limits of the CD-I system capacity for data delivery from optical disc.

The FMV decoding in a CD-I player is provided by a custom chip. According to AIM , Philips and Motorola are jointly developing one such chip while Matsushita is producing another. The FMV decoding system is being developed by the Consumer Electronics division, (Interactive Media Systems) of N.V. Philips in The Netherlands in close cooperation with Sony and Matsushita.

If CD-I can deliver FMV within the near future, then it could be nail in the coffin for DVI (see ACE issue 30), which had FMV as one of its main attractions. This is a mixed blessing for gamesplayers. On the one hand, DVI is more closely associated with business systems (and is also very expensive); on the other hand, the DVI computer graphics features were better than the CD-I spec.

> ***"I thought that dealing with Steve McQueen was tough until I met my first software engineer!"***
>
> **Gordon Stulberg, AIM Chairman**

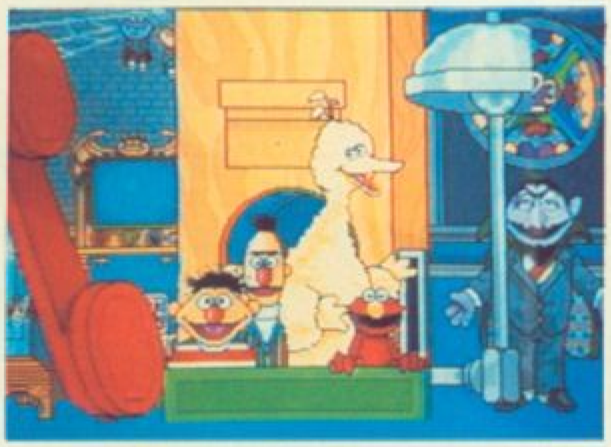
CD-I Dungeons?

The offices of AIM overlook the new offices of TSR, creators of "Dungeons and Dragons", the blockbuster classic fantasy game which promises to soar to a new strata of adventure in CD-I format."We're looking at doing an advanced "Dungeons And Dragons" that will use live action video," says Sarina Simon, ACE's Vice President of Product Development.

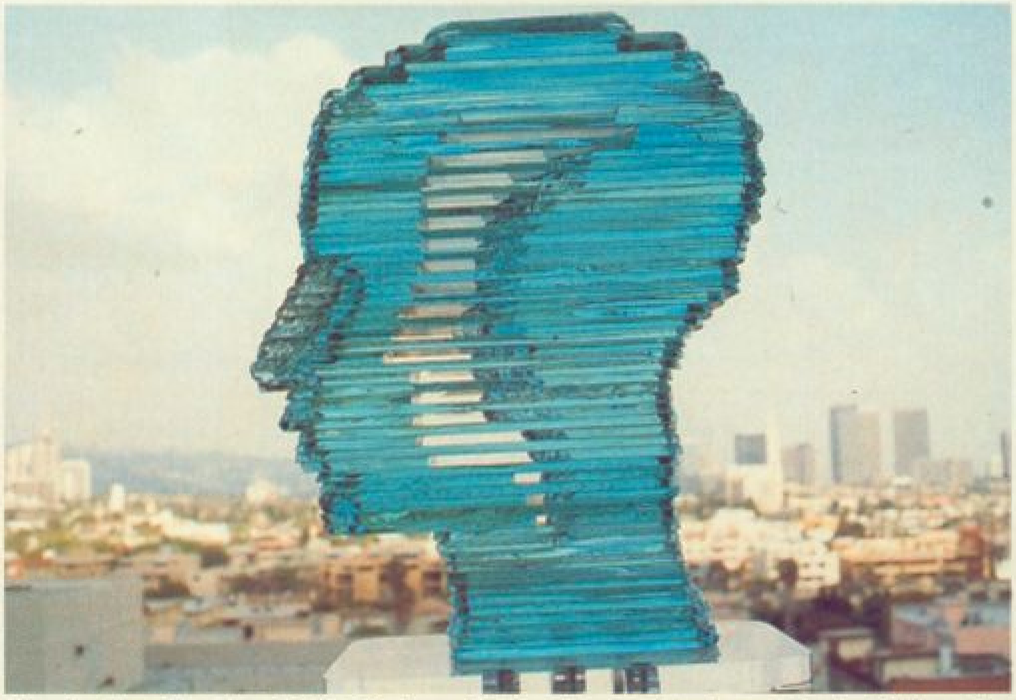
Emiel Petrone – with a statuette of one of his business associates in the background

Rumour has it that the first industrial CD-I may soon be released in France. Right now in London AIM's associate, European Interactive Media is working on a CD-I program for Renault, the French car manufacturer. CD-I was commissioned by Renault as a teaching aid for training mechanics.

Sarina Simon is AIM's Vice President of Product Development. Simon is one of the crack team of executives that AIM has assembled, each an expert in his/her field. Simon's background includes success as both editor and author of children's books, as well as having been an Executive Producer for Disney.

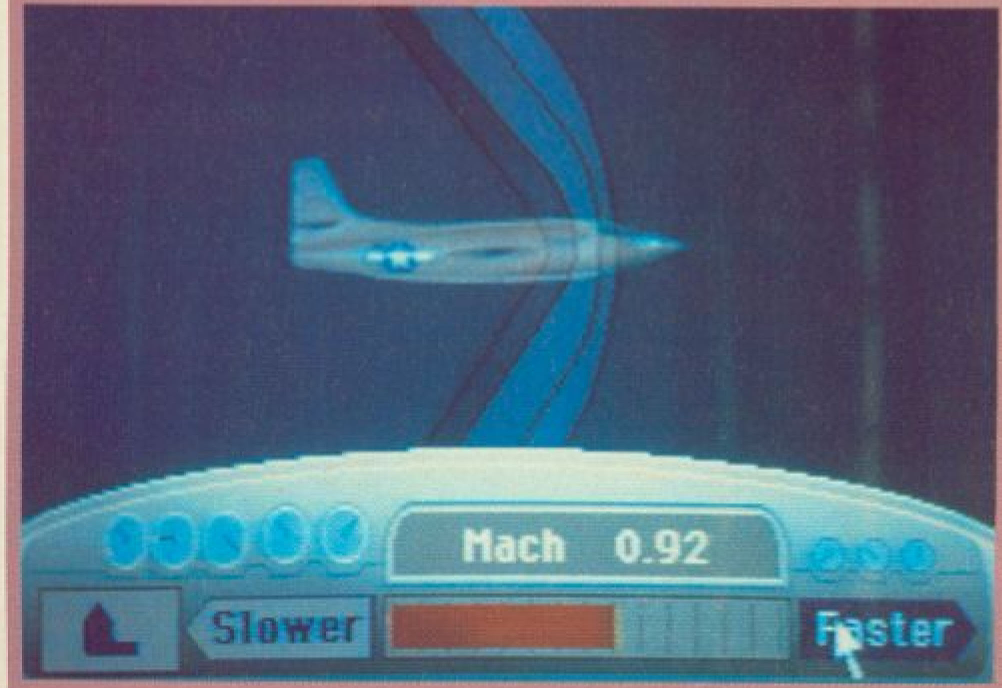


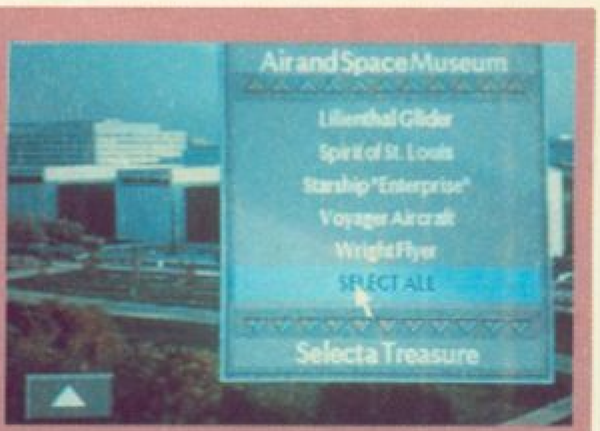
Whenever you select a telephone in the "Sesame St." program you have access to the Bert and Ernie jokeline. Beware! There are jokes spread randomly throughout the program so that Bert and Ernie's humour can follow you anywhere! We were busy exploring the castle when Ernie called to regale us with this juvenile classic:
-"What did the flower say to the bee?"
-"Buzz off."



The view from the office of AIM's Chairman, (or should we say head man), Gordon Stulberg. The statue is one of many intriguing artworks spread throughout AIM's plush West Los Angeles office. AIM's resemblance to The Museum of Contemporary Art is due largely to Mr. Stulberg who, for the last fifteen years, has compiled an impressive array of objets d'art.

BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER





Visit one of the world's great museums and enjoy an in-depth guided tour and STILL maintain your couch potato status!

This will be possible when AIM releases their CD-I disc, *Treasures Of The Smithsonian.*

On your 'arrival' at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. you can view a map to determine which of the buildings to 'visit' first. (There is also a passive alternative - if you don't want to interact the disc will continue to play you a guided tour.) We chose the Aerospace Museum, clicked our mouse on the building and were instantly transported to the exterior of the museum. From there we viewed the "menu" of treasures available inside and decided to have a look at the Bell X/1. We were then treated to a full video presentation, (with CD quality sound),of the history and development of the X/1. We learned that in this aircraft famed American Test pilot Chuck Yeager first broke the sound barrier.

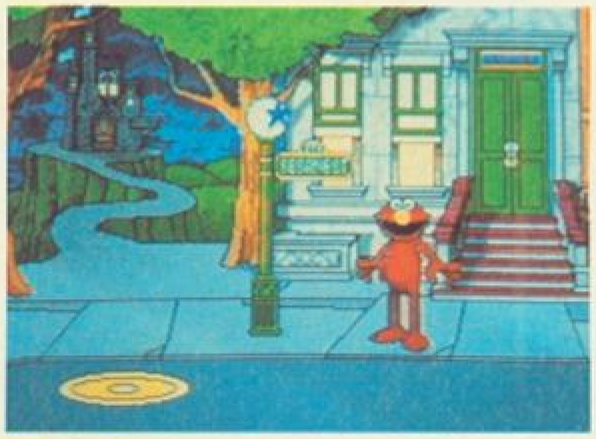
While still in the Bell X/1 segment we clicked on a sub-menu which allowed us to switch to a number of topics related to the main story. We chose to watch an animated wind-tunnel simulation of the X/1 as it accelerated from sub-sonic speed to Mach 1.40. By manipulating the mouse or joy-stick the viewer hasfull control of the aircraft's speed. As we zipped through the sound barrier we were shown a fascinating simulation of the sound and shock waves emanating from our aircraft!

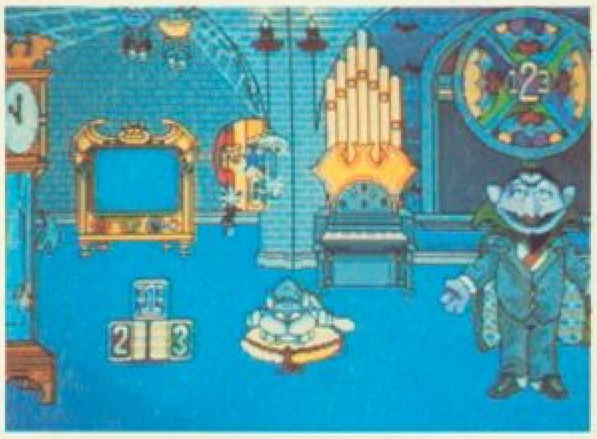
ACE readers are already familiar with the Philips CD-I machine. However, the unit most people know is in fact the industrial version (seen here in AIM's demonstration room). The home unit (pictured below) is a much more compact beast and is intended to be sold in the States for $999 (£620). Its release is not going to be a half-hearted affair either. We're talking about a new technology launch on a par with the video recorder - and the expected sales figures are every bit as high.

Stick, mouse, or ball?

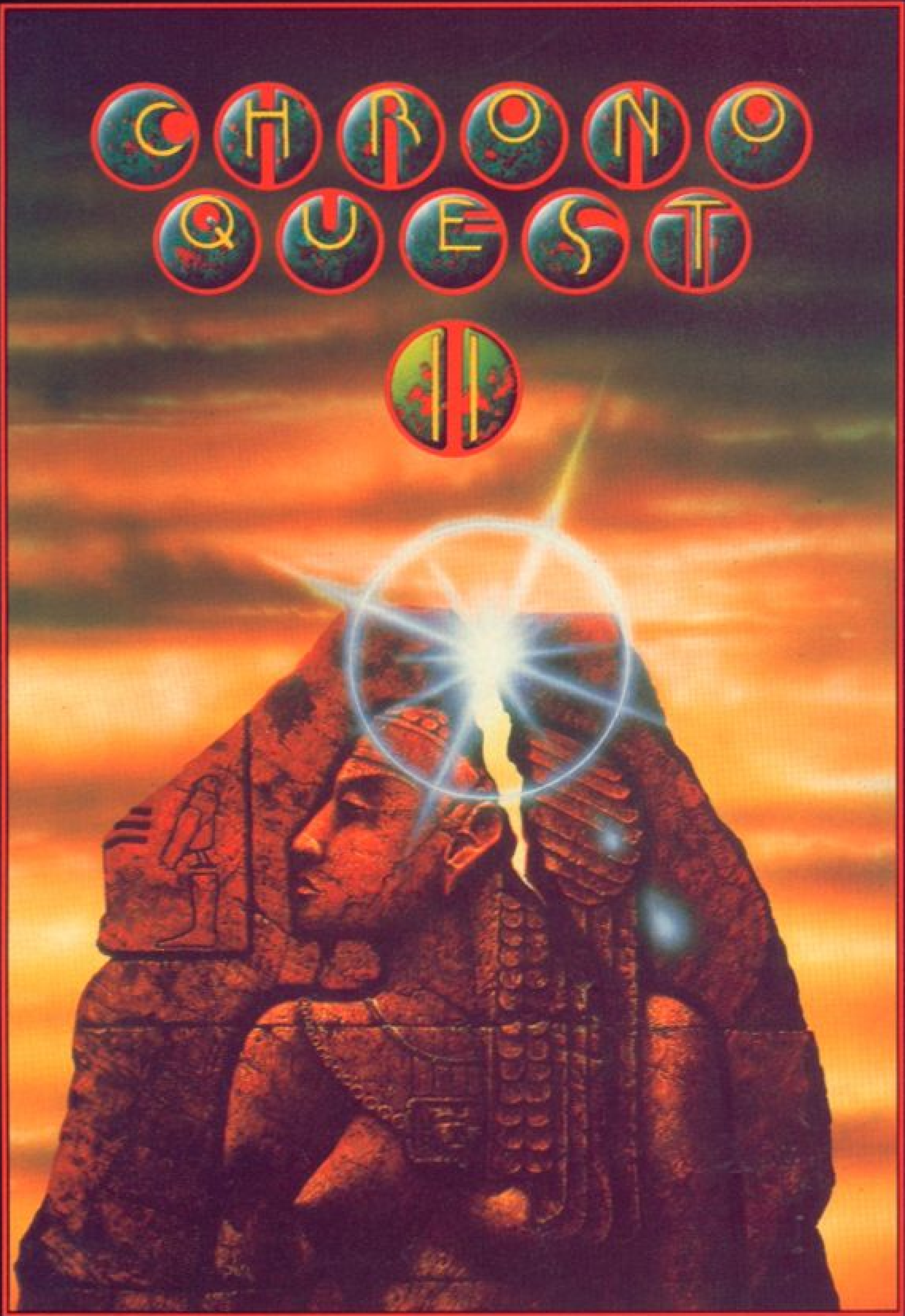
"We're using mouse technology on CD-I," explains Emiel Petrone, AIM's Senior Vice President of Sales and Distribution, "and we're perfecting the remote control possibilities. CD-I will come with an RS 232 connector that will allow you to use any kind of joy-stick available on remote control. We're even developing a remote control for children which has got a large ball on it, (similar to a track ball), and fits on the lap."

Good news for Amiga fans! AIM is currently collaborating with Cinemaware, (creators of Defender of the Crown and It Came From The Desert, see Ace 28), on a CD-I version of their World War One action-adventure game Wings.





In, **A Visit To Sesame Street** *children are entertained by familiar TV favourites. Here Kermit the Frog tells children how to operate the program so that they can enter the castle shown on the left. Once inside a room, floating stars surround every object that can be activated. Thus the young viewer can select the organ which will then play scary music, the building blocks which dance into a number formation asking to be counted, or the clock which tells the time. The fun of making random discoveries reminded us of when we first started playing with* **Cosmic Osmo** *(see Ace 23) . However, one advantage that children have over adults is their tireless capacity to enjoy 'discovering' the same thing over and over again!*



THE PASSAGE IS NARROW BUT YOU FINALLY SUCCEED BY SLIPPING UNSIDE.

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- ★ Superb plots and strategy make it a totally absorbing game.
- ★ 3/6 Disks Atari ST, 3 Disks Amiga, 7 Disks PC - with save game facility.
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There's more than your life at stake as you cross the paths of some of History's most seductive (and deadly) damsels, fearsome beasts, temperamental Gods and haughty heroes.

It will probably keep you pulling your hair out for months until you put the enormous temporal puzzle together.

Screen Shots from the Amiga version AMIGA/ATARI ST £29.99 PC £39.99

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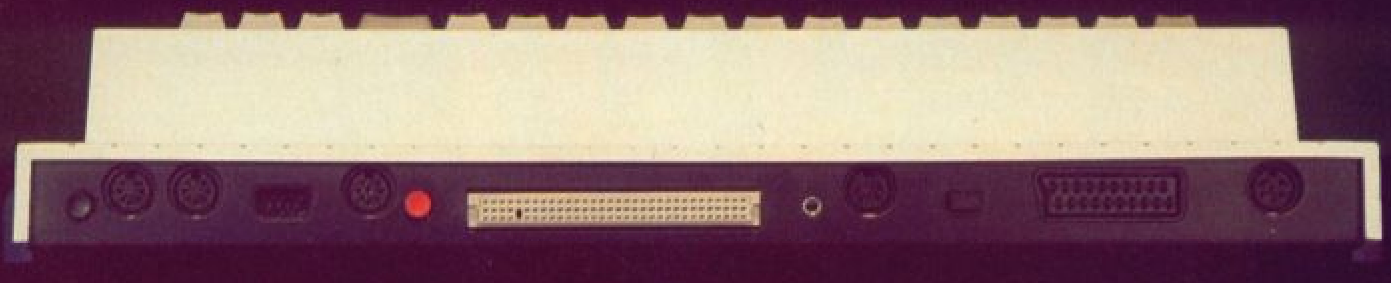
As can be seen from the back of the machine, the SAM has no shortage of ports. Games players might be initially disappointed to note that the SAM carries only one Atari standard joystick port, but don't worry - an adaptor is available from MGT which allows two joysticks to be operated from the same port.

If you are musically minded you will be pleased to see that the SAM is equipped with both MIDI in and MIDI out ports. The presence of this feature could well make the SAM a better buy than the ST for people who want to experiment with MIDI without spending too much money. This will depend of course, on whether the SAM manages to attract the same calibre of sequencing software as the ST has done.



Test Driving the Sam Coupé

Despite a continuing move towards 16 and 32-bit technology, Miles Gordon Technology have developed a new 8-bit micro. Laurence Scotford takes it for a spin and finds out if there is still life below 16-bits

The SAM Coupé is undoubtedly one of the most impressive 8-bit machines to date. With graphics to rival the ST and sound that comes close to that on the Amiga, this is not a machine to be ignored. But the question on everybody's lips is this: Can a machine which relies on microprocessor technology over a decade old really have a place in the Advanced Computer Entertainment of tomorrow? Below we give you the facts and let you decide.

Not only is the SAM a powerful graphics and sound engine but also the very first machine to come with a built-in device for backing up software. Provided that you have a SAM with one or more disk drives there is a button on the back of the machine which allows the current screen to be saved to disk, and cassette based games to be backed up to disk. Previously it was necessary to buy a separate peripheral to achieve this. It will be interesting to see exactly how the industry takes to a machine which enables software to be duplicated so easily.

The most publicised feature of the SAM Coupé has been it's Spectrum compatibility, so it is not surprising to find that one of the the SAM's four screen modes is identical to the standard Spectrum screen (complete with those annoying parallel attributes that cause the infamous colour clash). But the SAM is actually capable of a far more impressive show than a mere low-resolution eight colours.

How does a high resolution screen with 16 colours per screen at pixel resolution chosen from a palette of 128 sound? Because that is exactly what is available to anyone writing software specifically for the SAM. This means that we are likely to see some games with graphics comparable to those seen on the ST, and it doesn't end there. With clever use of interrupts it is also possible to have a useful 128 colours on screen at once, as demonstrated by the *Flash* Graphics package that comes with the machine. And if you are a business buff you won't be disappointed either – mode 3 when used with a smaller character set gives 85 characters per line, which is more than ample for most serious applications.

I was further impressed by the SAM's sound capabilities, which are unprecedented for an 8-bit machine. The machine makes use of the Philips SAA1099 stereo sound generator. This beast, which is not the most popular choice for microcomputers, boasts six channel stereo sound and noise generators. This totally outstrips the sound capabilities of the ST and comes close to rivalling those of the Amiga. If you like your games loud you can also hook the SAM up to your hi-fi and drive the neighbours crazy.

The new SAM Coupé from Miles Gordon Technology – Is it tomorrow's star machine, or just a white elephant?

WHY 8-BIT?

When we saw the specification for MGT's new micro the first thing we wanted to know was: Why invest so much time and money in developing a brand new machine with yesterday's technology at it's heart?

Alan Miles, co-founder of the company with Bruce Gordon, explained to us the philosophy behind the machine.

"In the early days of motoring, cars were being built with twelve cylinders, but as transport technology improved, cars of similar power could be constructed using far fewer cylinders. The same is true", says Miles, "of computer technology."

An important factor in MGT's choice of an 8-bit microprocessor to power its new machine was affordability. Using a 16-bit processor like Motorola's 68000 chip drastically increases the cost of each machine. The Coupé however is designed to be a utility product for a mass market, and therefore cost was an important factor.

WE WANT YOUR OPINION!

We want to know your views on the SAM Coupé. Remember that it will be the reaction of the general public that ultimately decides whether it will be a roaring success or a miserable failure.

The question we would like you to consider is this:

Can a new 8-bit machine like the SAM Coupé really provide the Advanced Computer Entertainment that you, the end user, demands?

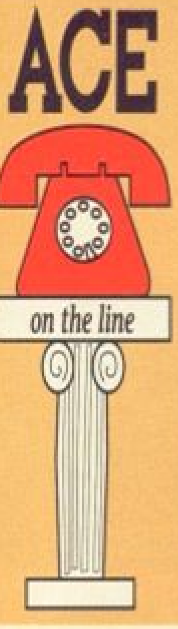
You can give us your answer by phoning on of the numbers below:

0898 400 787 – **No**, the SAM Coupé is not my idea of Advanced Computer Entertainment.

0898 400 786 – **Yes**, the SAM Coupé sounds like my kind of machine.

The results of this survey will be announced to the industry in a future issue, so have your say, vote today!

Calls are charged at 38p per minute peak and 25p per minute off-peak.
Lines are open 24 hours a day.



UGLY DUCKLING

The Coupé is certainly not the most attractive machine around. A white moulded plastic body with dark blue feet and squared off edges are not particularly aesthetically pleasing, but then, for most users looks are the least important factor of the machine.

One of the first things that stands out about the coupé is the grey keyboard set towards the back of the machine. This does at first look rather odd, but actually makes a lot of sense. You can rest your wrists on the lower half of the machine and type away quite comfortably.

The keyboard itself is not of particularly high quality and tends to click noisily. Good news for touch typists though is that the pitch and layout are close enough to standard to make life easy. Incidentally the keyboard is fully programmable, so there is no problem in say, assigning foreign characters to certain keys. There is also a numeric keypad which (like that on the CPC range) doubles as a set of function keys – very handy and very clever.

The power supply, which is external to the machine, is a bulky white affair, and rather unusually, is also the point at which the coaxial cable appears for connection to an ordinary television set

The basic machine comes with a generous 256 Kilobytes on board, expandable to 512K.

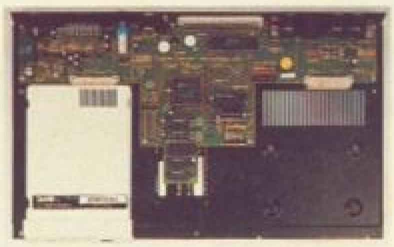
One fairly recent innovation that has become established for advanced machines is mice and WIMP environments – MGT have thankfully made provision for SAM users to be at the leading edge of technology too. Although the SAM does not come with a mouse, it does have a Mouse port and driving software built in. They have also promised a complete WIMP environment for use with the optional mouse, so power users can shrug off the Spectrum style command system provided on the basic machine. There is a complementary port for a light pen or light gun.

There are bound to be add-ons galore for the SAM from third parties as well, by virtue of the Spectrum style expansion connector at the rear of the machine. This gives hardware developers access to every signal that could possibly be of use, enabling the expansion port to be used for everything from RAM packs to video digitisers.

The basic machine comes with a cassette interface for loading and saving software. This is achieved via a single 3.5 mm jack, which is rather annoying because it means that if you are saving as well as loading software you have to be constantly swapping the lead between the EAR and MIC ports on your cassette recorder. A variety of tape transfer speeds are available, and on the whole the interface proved reliable.

The disk drives are very elegant slim-line Citizen 3 and a half inch drives which slot into two ports on the front of the machine – very neat. Disks operate at a capacity of 1 Megabyte or 780 Kilobytes when formatted. That is equivalent to the disk capacities of both ST and Amiga disks. What makes the MGT drives stand out is that they are very fast. The Coupé's average Seek and Read/Write times are consistently better than those for both the ST and Amiga, so you won't have to suffer lengthy disk accessing in the middle of games.

The SAM Coupé is, without doubt, a very impressive machine. There is absolutely no reason why there should not be some very impressive software for it. The question is, whether this software is going to appear. At the moment it looks very much like Coupé owners will have to make do with the enormous amount of Spectrum software that is available. Meanwhile it is certain that end users can expect plenty of support from MGT themselves.



The insides of the machine show just how neatly and carefully it has been designed. The long chip just below the white expansion connector is the Z80B microprocessor, while the square chip at the centre of the PCB is the ASIC - a gate array that connects all the other bits and pieces in the machine.

FACT BOX

SAM Coupé (cassette based):	£169.95
SAM Coupé & 1 Disk Drive:	£249.90
SAM Coupé & 2 Disk Drives:	£329.85
SAM Coupé Disk Drive:	£89.95
256K Add On Memory:	£39.95

Details available from:
Miles Gordon Technology plc, Lakeside, Phoenix Way,

THE ACE VERDICT

The SAM is a very brave departure for MGT, whose previous products have been peripherals for other manufacturers' machines. Prospective buyers should not be put off by the 8-bit processor – the machine still performs very well compared to the 16-bit machines. When you consider that the machine is only £30 more expensive than a Spectrum +2 it represents superb value to the first time buyer, or Spectrum owner looking to upgrade to a better machine. The Coupé is an excellent product which deserves to do well. Let's hope that the general public and the software producers agree.

THE INDUSTRY REACTS

When we spoke to key industry figures about the SAM the reaction to the product was favourable, but not backed up by any real commitment to produce software for the machine.

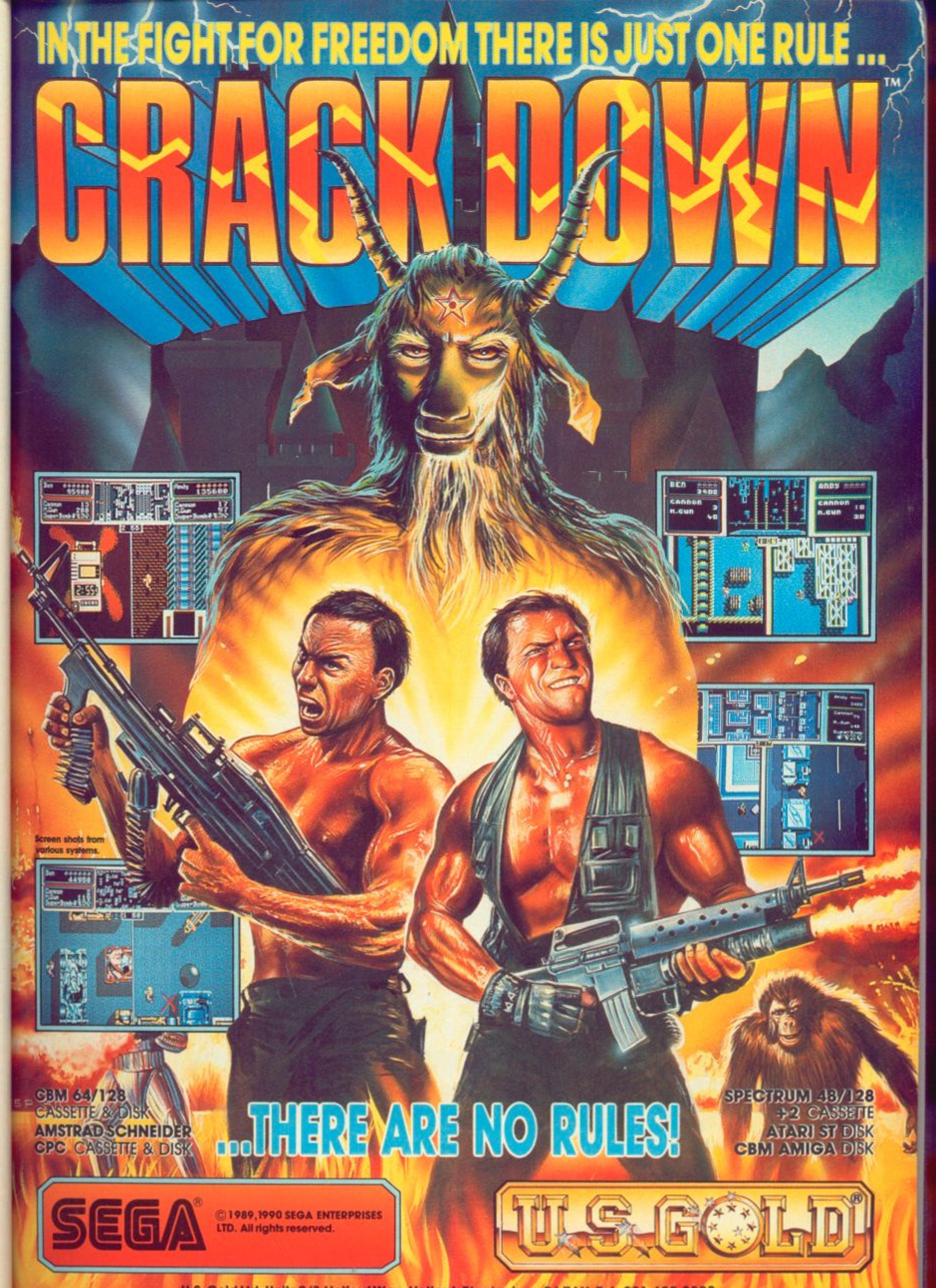
Geoff Brown of **US Gold** believes that the low end of the market is moving over to cartridge–based systems and therefore the SAM is something of a misplaced product, though its Spectrum compatibility will help it. Although 50% of USG's sales are 8-bit product they have no plans to produce SAM software in the near future. **Geoff Brown**'s verdict is that whether or not the SAM succeeds will become a price sensitive issue in the end.

Domark see the Coupé as an attempt to gain some of Amstrad's huge share of the cheap micro market. Although they will be producing their spectrum software to run with the SAM they will not be turning their attention to specific software for the near future.

Andrew Hewson also believes that MGT have a difficult job ahead of them in reaching the mass market they hope for. On the use of 8-bit technology he commented: 'we all have a romantic attachment to the steam engine, but it is yesterday's news'. While he hopes to be able to support the machine in some way, Hewson will not be producing any SAM specific software either.

At a recent press conference, MGT came up with a list of just seventeen planned releases, and that was a mixture of games, serious applications, and educational software.

It looks very much as if the Coupé is getting caught in a catch-22 situation. None of the major software houses are going to produce software specifically for the machine until sales take off, and sales are not going to take off until there is software available for the machine. It is just possible that the SAM's spectrum compatibility will help it pull through, but it definitely has a long uphill struggle ahead of it.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Screen shots from various systems.

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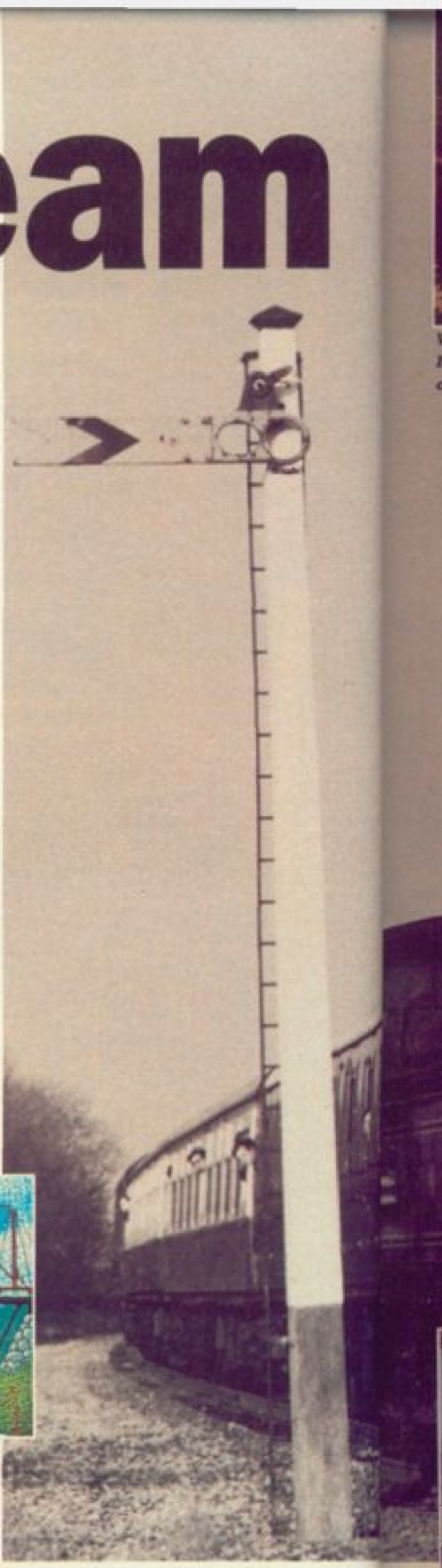
Steam Dream



Microprose are about to launch a superb simulation of the early days of steam. If you fancy nostalgia, strategy, and gameplay all in one package, check out *Railroad Tycoon.*

Time was when rail and steam were the road to unfathomable riches. Once granted a charter by government you incorporated your company, raised cash from greedy investors, and watched the pennies and pounds roll in.

Well, it wasn't quite that easy. Hundreds of companies went bust and while fortunes were made, others ended up on Skid Row. Now's your chance to find out whether you could have out-railroaded the Vanderbilts in this detailed simulation from Microprose that takes you on a strategic ride through 100 years of steam.

The game is mouse/menu driven and very easy to play. Having selected your area of operations (from the US, UK, and Europe) you choose a difficulty level (Investory, Financier, Mogul, or Tycoon) and away you go, competing against a host of computer generated railroad companies for a slice of the action.

You start by examining the map and checking out towns that need rail services. Norwich, for example, might be in need of textiles and passenger transport – and you might find both in Thetford. Linking the two together could be profitable, depending on the current cost of finance and the investment needed in terms of land and rolling stock to construct and service the line.

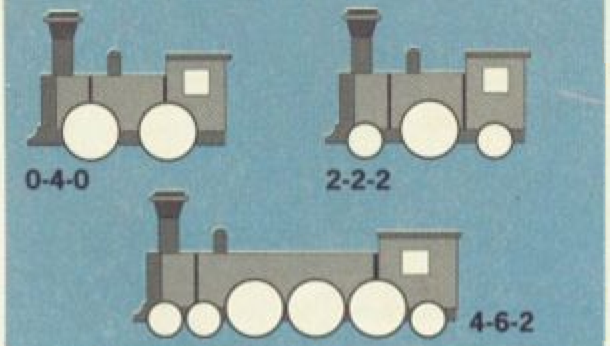
AUTHENTIC

Throughout the game, you're constantly up against contemporary limitations of technology. Newspaper reports keep you informed of developments that could bring new engines onto the market – they also tell you occasionally how your competitors are doing.

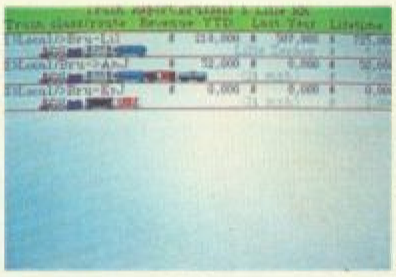
All action can be viewed on the map at different levels of magnification. As the years go by, you see little railroads branching out all over the country and – at closer magnification – the trains chugging along them. Watching the game is almost as much pleasure as playing it!

CO-CO, BO-BO, AND 2-2-2

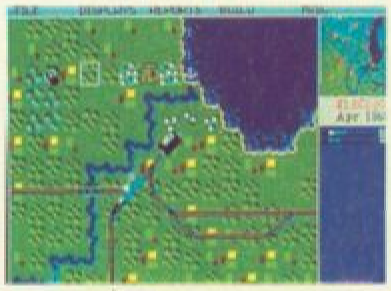
Railroad Tycoon uses the Whyte system to refer to steam engines, but it can be rather confusing for the uninitiated. Basically, it involves making a distinction between the driving and non-driving axles. The number of wheels are then counted from the front of the train. Here are a couple of examples:



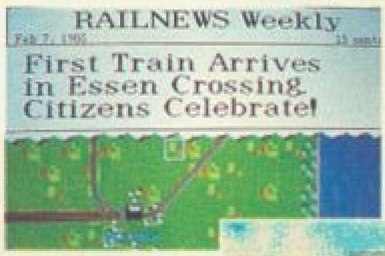
Modern locomotives are referred to by letters, according to the number of driving axles: A is one, B two, and so on. A locomotive on two four-wheeled bogies with a motor to each axle is a BO-BO, with two six wheeled bogies it's a CO-CO.



Different trains can carry different loads. Each train you choose is true to the period. You may get newspaper reports flashed on-screen, telling you of new models being produced, in which case you may want to add them to your fleet. You can analyse the financial return from each engine/railway whenever you want – better trains are more expensive to buy, but they will usually deliver a better return



You construct your railway using the mouse to indicate the route on the map. Thereafter you can watch your trains chuff-chuffing up and down the lines, making you lots of money...



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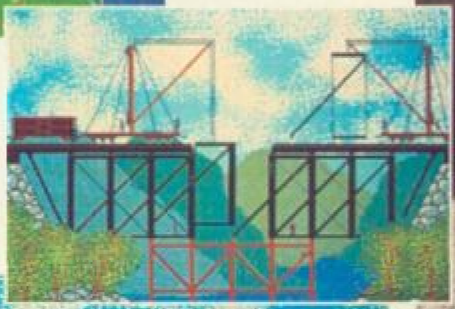
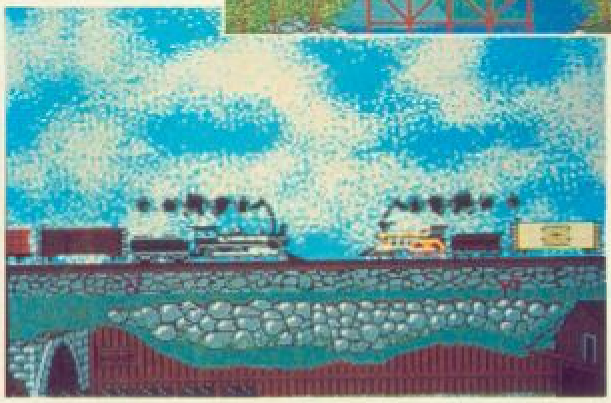
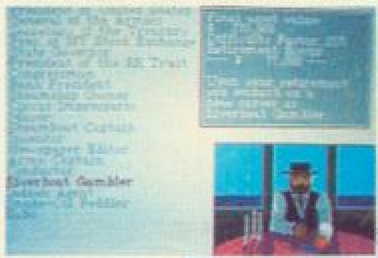
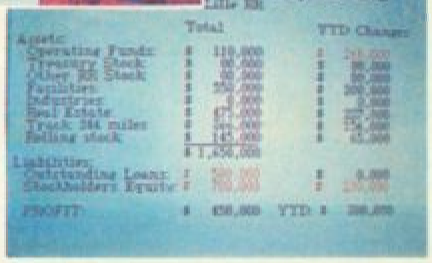


Bridge building is accompanied by a quick, slick animated sequence – the bridge designs were taken from contemporary illustrations



At the end of the game you get a rating according to your financial performance. Roll in the cash and you could end up President of the USA – not as fanciful as it may seem, since many of today's most powerful American families started in the railroad business

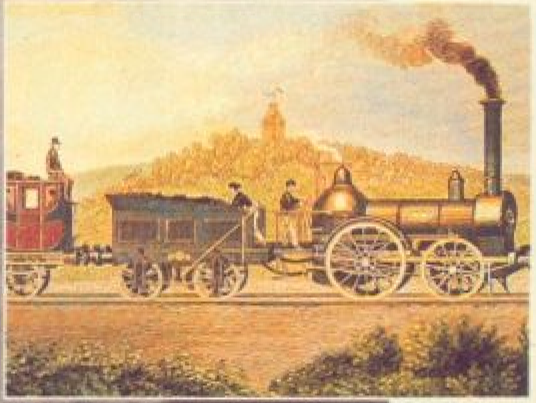




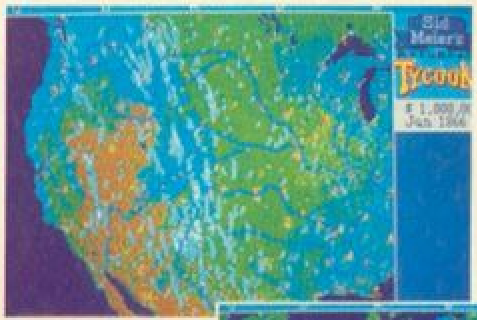
Sheet; 1903

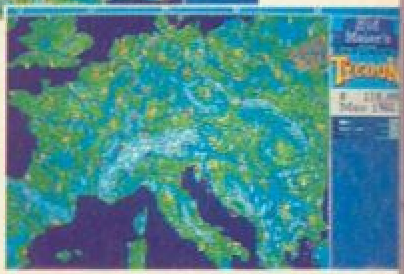
The Annual Balance sheet – we're making money! Pity about the indebtedness though

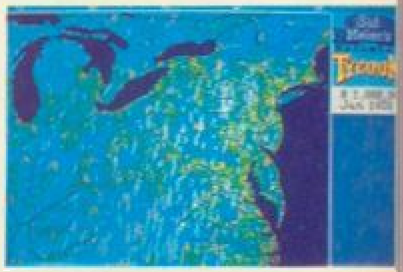
When will we get a train game with graphics like this?! It's Locomotion by Pacific Data Images and comes from one of their award-winning computer animations



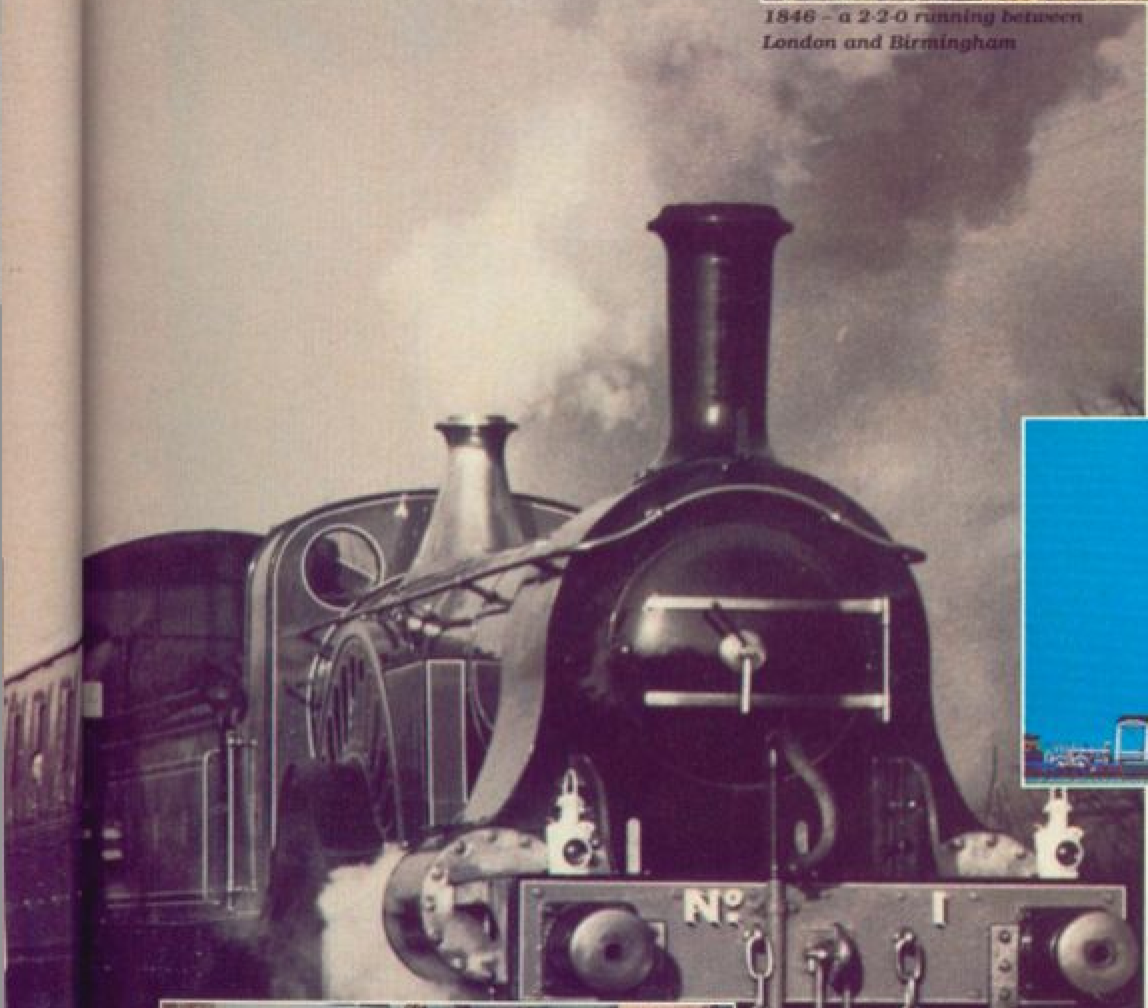
1846 – a 2-2-0 running between London and Birmingham

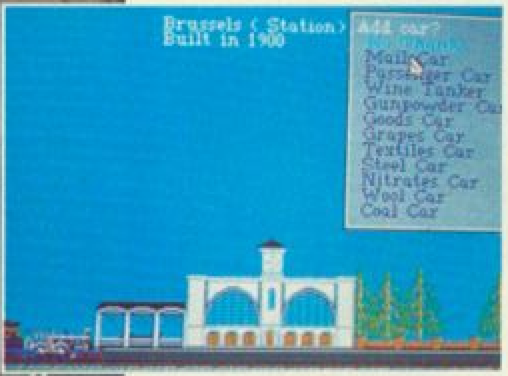




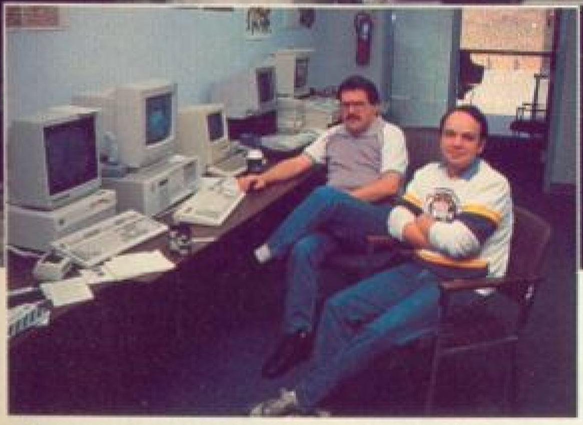


You can build your railroads in Europe, Great Britain, Western USA, or the East Coast. However the spread of railway technology in the 19th century meant that different territories were developed at different times. If you play the English scenario, you can start in 1828; in 1830 on the East Coast; the West Coast in 1866; and 1900 for Europe (by which time railway technology was considerably more advanced, giving you faster and more powerful trains)





Once you've chosen your territory, you have to build a station and, of course, some trains. You add different carriages (at different cost) to cater for different demands



Software genius Sid Meier (the man who brought you many previous Microprose hits, including Silent Service and M1 Tank Platoon) on the right, with gametester Russ on the left, who took us through the game and showed uncanny skill at scenting profit!

During the game you get involved in many aspects of railroad management, from the financial side to engineering. You are constantly on the look out for other opportunities and there is considerable satisfaction from initiating a full-scale rate war with one of your competitors and winning. You can examine your balance sheet at any time to check how you're doing and whether your investments are paying off with increased revenue.

Railroad Tycoon is visually attractive, crammed full of contemporary detail, and – judging by the pre-production copy we played – likely to prove highly addictive. Don't miss the full review as soon as we receive a finished copy!

Steaming Forth

The Forth Bridge contains 54000 tons of steel held together by 6500000 rivets and supported by 740000 cubic feet of granite. The cement alone weighed over twenty thousand tons. Over fifty people died during the construction process.

The Longest Tunnel

...in the world runs between Hokkaido and Honshu in Japan. It's 33 miles long and was dug through extremely unstable terrain over a period of 23 years, ending in 1987. The Channel Tunnel, by contrast, is to be shorter and dug through comparatively easy terrain. It will, however, almost certainly cost more. Why?

Further Reading

Best source book for the history of Railways is probably The Guinness Railway Book by John Marshall, packed with facts and figures and a bargain at £9.95. For regular reading, try our sister magazines Steam World and Steam Railway.

IN THE BEGINNING

Railroad Tycoon allows you to develop your railroad at the very beginnings of the Train Age in 1828...but railways have been around a lot longer than that...

2200BC
Babylonians use parallel stone tracks to guide vehicles
250BC
Ancient Greeks use similar principles to carry goods between Athens and Piraeus harbour
13th century
Primitive tracks used in mines in Germany
16th century
Rail systems in use in mines all over Europe
1604
Earliest recorded railway in Britain constructed west of Nottingham at a cost of £166 to carry coal in wagons with flanged wheels
1681
First recorded use of the word 'railway' in England
1807
First railway to carry fare-paying passengers opens in Swansea. Carriages were pulled by horses. Experiments were carried out with sail power before steam was introduced
1825
First iron train bridge constructed over the River Gaunless for the Stockton and Darlington railway
1827
First railroad in the US to offer a regular public service opens in Baltimore (home of Microprose)
1828
First public railway opens in France
1830
First public railway tunnel opened at Tyler Hill for the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway

KICK OFF 2
RSTS
AVR
KICKOFF II
ANCO

MAY RELEASE
AMIGA - ATARI ST - IBM PC
CBM64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD

ANCO SOFTWARE LTD., UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE ROAD,
DARTFORD, KENT. Telephone No.: 0322 92513/92518. FAX No.: 0322 93422.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

ACE exclusively reveals the secrets and specifications of Japan's stunning NEO-GEO (New World) games machine...

Special thanks to Masato Niizeki and ASCII Corporation for their assistance

The Personal Neo-Geo system, to be launched in the UK in September.

The dream of every dedicated arcade gamesplayer has just become a reality, writes Rik Haynes. The new 16-bit NEO-GEO games machine comes in two versions: coin-op and home-based. At last you'll be able to play an identical version of your favourite coin-op game in the comfort of your own home.

NEO-GEO is produced by SNK, a successful Japanese coin-op manufacturer with a string of arcade hits under its belt including: *Ikari Warriors*, *Time Soldiers* and *Beast Busters*.

NEO-GEO's technical specifications are impressive for a home video games system. Its central processing power comes from a Motorola 68000 supported by a Zilog Z80A. Added to this are 380 hardware sprites which can be smoothly enlarged or reduced, three independent bitmapped video screens, 8Mb of character ROM storing 65536 16x16 pixel character blocks, 4096 on-screen colours from a palette of 65536, and compact disk quality stereo sound with an amazing 13 channels of sound. But the most unusual – and ultimately the best – feature of the NEO-GEO is its ROM storage capacity. It can handle games cartridges up to the staggering size of 330-megabits (64Mb), that compares to the humble four-megabit (512K) carts found on the Sega Megadrive/Genesis console.

A novel aspect of the NEO-GEO is its IC card used to store player data. IC cards are credit-card sized memory storage devices with their own battery-supply, thus they can keep data intact even when they're not plugged into a computer. The NEO-GEO IC card is a 2K RAM slice of silicon which stores player data for up to 27 games titles. You could play a NEO-GEO game in the arcades, save your game position and hi-scores on the IC card, go home and return to the game on your Personal NEO-GEO console (provided you've got the same games cartridge of course). Once you've stored data on the IC card you can plug it into any NEO-GEO system. The IC card could become the Filofax of the gameworld.

Top Player Golf, using 4096 colours on-screen at once.

There are currently six games titles available for the NEO-GEO, including *Top Player Golf*, *NAM-1975*, *Majong* and *Magician Road*. SNK plans to release 32 NEO-GEO games this year, and there's a possibility of other arcade manufactures licensing their games on to the NEO-GEO system.

The Personal NEO-GEO console plugs into any normal TV and costs 58000 yen (around £230) in Japan. A typical 40-megabit games cartridge costs 28000 yen (around £110), making them the most expensive console games ever sold. SNK has an ingenious solution to this problem: you can rent NEO-GEO carts for around 500 yen (£2) per night – you can also rent a Personal NEO-GEO console overnight for 700 yen (£3). A similar scheme is likely to be introduced in this country when the UK Personal NEO-GEO is released in the autumn. Sega already has a console rental scheme over here with 1200 RCA/Columbia video rental stores, where you can rent a Sega Master console or games cartridges for a night.

SNK believes it will sell 300000 Personal NEO-GEO's and 1.2 million game cartridges in Japan before the end of the year.

The official UK launch date for the NEO-GEO is September, visitors to the Computer Entertainment Show will see both the Arcade and Personal versions of the NEO-GEO in The Living Room of the Future exhibit sponsored by ACE. The CES show will be held from 13th-16th September at London's Earls Court exhibition centre.

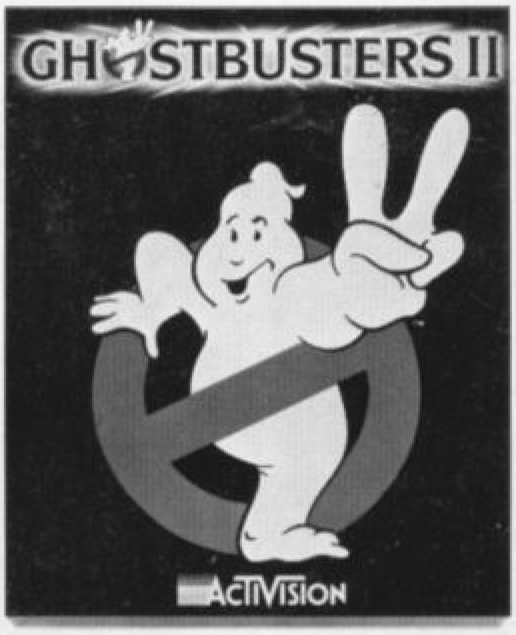
NEO GEO SPECS

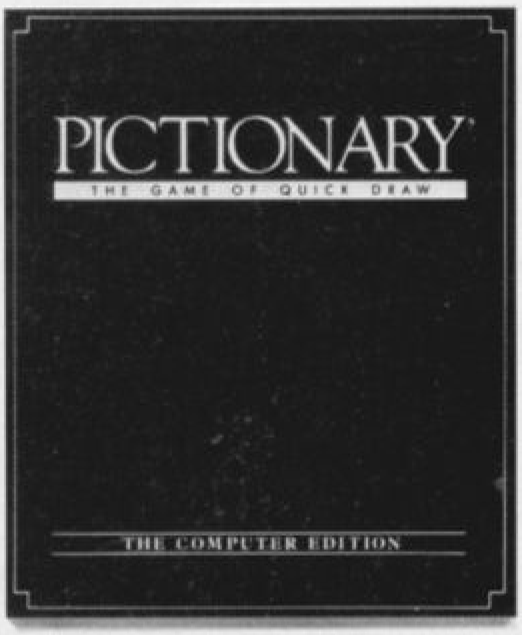
Processors: 68000 (main), Z80A (support)
ROM – max. size: 64Mb
IC card: stores player data for up to 27 games titles
Sprites – max. on-screen: 380 with hardware assisted sprite scaling
Colours – max. on-screen: 4096 out of a palette of 65536 colours
Graphics: 3 independent background video screens
8Mb character ROM allows storage of 65536 16x16 pixel blocks
Sound: Stereo digital audio of Compact Disc quality
3 channels of Programmable Sound Generation (PSG)
7 channels of Pulse Control Modulation (PCM)
2 channels of Frequency Modulation (FM)
1 channel of Noise Generation
Walkman headphone socket

Arcade Neo-Geo is a six-game multi-player coin-op

Save £5 on 16 bit software

(Hardly a 2 bit offer)


GHOSTBUSTERS II
ACTIVISION


PICTIONARY
THE GAME OF QUICK DRAW
THE COMPUTER EDITION

Enter Boots before 21st April, and you'll find £5 zapped off selected 16 bit titles. From having the last laugh on the Joker, to joining Indiana Jones on the Last Crusade, the choice is mega.

Drop in, and you could save quite a bit.

A better buy at Boots

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SCREEN TEST

ALL NEW PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC – Predicted Interest Curve – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. And now it's entered the 90's...

We on ACE know you don't just **play** a game – you **experience** it. The newly upgraded Predicteded Interest Curve is the **only** review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The PIC Curve has been redesigned to immediately **give you** the info **you need** at just a glance. To back up our instant appraisal there is an expanded, in-depth comment at each stage of the game's playlife.

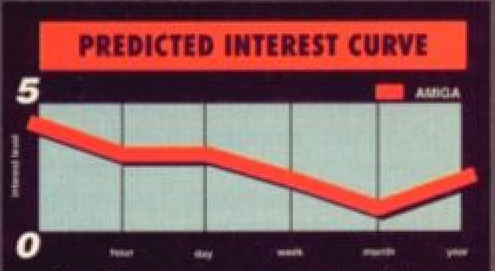
The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But this tells you an awful lot than just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself)...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making rude remarks about 'those awful hostile games the boys play these days'.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into – not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutant Macdonald Gettysburgers....or Knights of the Crystallion* – one of this month's red hot releases.



The PIC commentary section tells you exactly what it's like to unwrap your game, load it up, and play it – giving you those essential snippets of information and reaction that determine whether or not this is a game you have to buy. The ACE Predicted Interest Curve – going straight to the heart of the Games Experience.

STARRING MINER WILLY
SCORE

Ye Gods! Is this not ye olde *Manic Miner??* Now reborn on the Amiga, check it out – together with other ancient dogs of war, 16-blitzed onto the new machines – all on page 60.

UPDATES, UPDATES, READ ALL ABOUT 'EM!

Dragon's Lair for the PC, plus *Typhoon Thompson* on the Amiga, and 16-bit versions of *Risk* – check out the latest conversions on pages 66/67. All 16-bit this month – 8-bitters get their turn next issue.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES
This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is. Find out more in the Pic Curve Power panel on this page...

Each review also carries special 'Version Boxes' that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings for...

GRAPHICS
All aspects of the game's graphics with the limitations of each machine taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will therefore score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

AUDIO
The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

IQ FACTOR
Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the risk of mental effort – which some people actually enjoy...Note that ACE readers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

FUN FACTOR
Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be *either* fun *or* intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING
This is not just plucked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious now...

100-199 ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

VERSION BOXES
This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE TEAM

Laurence Scotford has been playing games since he was a nipper, but some of them we probably ought not to mention. There was hot competition for the ACE Reviews Editor position from gamesters all over the country, but Laurence pipped them all at the post by showing that he could not only push a game to its limit, but he could push a pen too and tell you all about it.

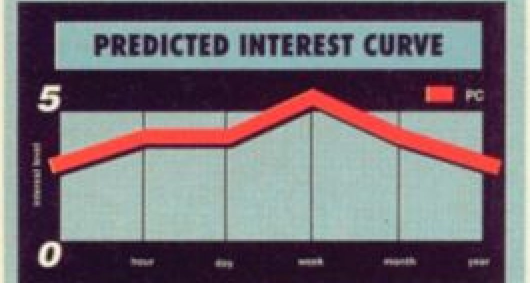
Steve Cooke, one of the original editors of this award-winning magazine, is known to thousands through his many other previous identities, including Zzaps!'s White Wizard, The Pilgrim and Old Baldy. Steve spends most of his time in dark corners playing *Leisure Suit Larry*. He describes himself as 'an authority on obscure forms of entertainment.'

Rik Haynes was Reviews Editor on Britain's biggest selling computer weekly and has been hooked on games since spotting a Space Invaders machine in the corner of a Southend-on-Sea pub back in '78. Rik's reviews are renowned for being hard-hitting and often outspoken...

Eugene Lacey is one of Britain's most experienced games journalists; previously editor of C&VG and now ACE roving reviewer...

THE ACE PROMISE

Unlike some other magazines, we undertake NEVER to review unfinished or so-called 'preview versions'. If it's here, it's what you'll find on the shelves. The only exceptions to this rule are clearly marked 'Prevew' in the corner – and are NOT rated.



Harpoon is a very detailed and complicated product, so it will take you some time to get used to the way the simulation works. Even when you have done this, you can expect to play several missions before you take on the strategic thinking necessary to be successful. Having twelve missions which never play the same way twice, and the possibility of further battlesets should greatly increase the life of this simulation.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
PC	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned.		

PC

There is nothing graphically spectacular in this game, but there isn't really any need for it. The screen layout works very well, and the animations provide nice interludes. Because of the graphical style of the game, the CGA and medium-res EGA versions are quite bearable, and much the same goes for the occasional sound

				ACE RATING
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	8	940
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	9	

HARPOON

MIRRORSOFT/PSS launch a realistic new simulation which demonstrates that navel warfare is no game

ACE RATED

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

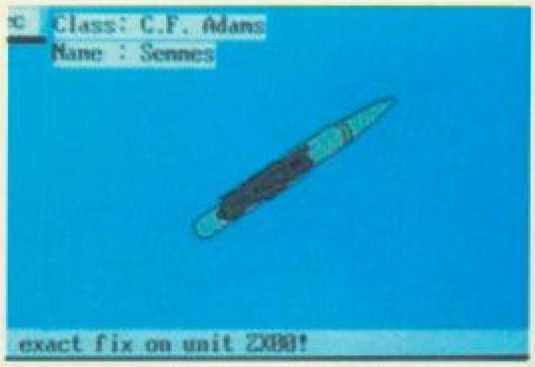
"SEA warfare is machines fighting other machines, with men directing them and serving as parts of the machine to do things it cannot."

That is the frightening reality of modern naval warfare, as summed up by *Harpoon*'s creator Larry Bond. Whereas the outcome of conventional land-based warfare is still heavily reliant on the number and deployment of ordinary combat troops, increasingly sophisticated technology has turned naval battles into a few tense hours of hide and seek in which a single missile can mean the difference between victory and defeat. The modern naval commander is continually fed information gleaned from the complex equipment he has at his disposal, and he must use that information as a basis for the many broad tactical decisions he makes every hour that his ships are in the water.

It is this process of command that *Harpoon* seeks to simulate in as realistic a way as possible. The game comes with a single battleset based around possible East-West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be made available for use with *Harpoon.* There are twelve scenarios you can play within the battleset from a simple seek-and-destroy mission right up to a full campaign.

The whole game is controlled via a series of drop-down menus and dialogue boxes, so it is highly recommended that you play with a mouse. If you don't happen to have one, however, the game can be played just as adequately with the keyboard alone. There are three maps provided on-screen with which you can plan and monitor your actions. These are the strategic map, which shows the whole area in which the campaign is fought, the Group Map which shows the location of your groups of craft, and the Unit map, which is a close scale map showing one or more of your units in detail. These maps aside there is one corner of the screen remaining which shows information on your currently selected group or target, and is also use to show animations during attack and other game sequences.

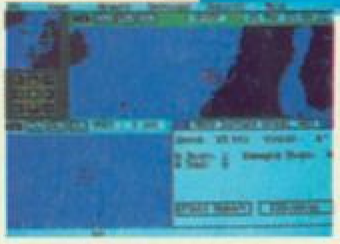
As is the case in real warfare, there are no clear-cut winners and losers in the missions in *Harpoon*, but your objective should be to carry out your orders with the minimum losses, while inflicting damage to the enemy whenever a viable situation occurs.



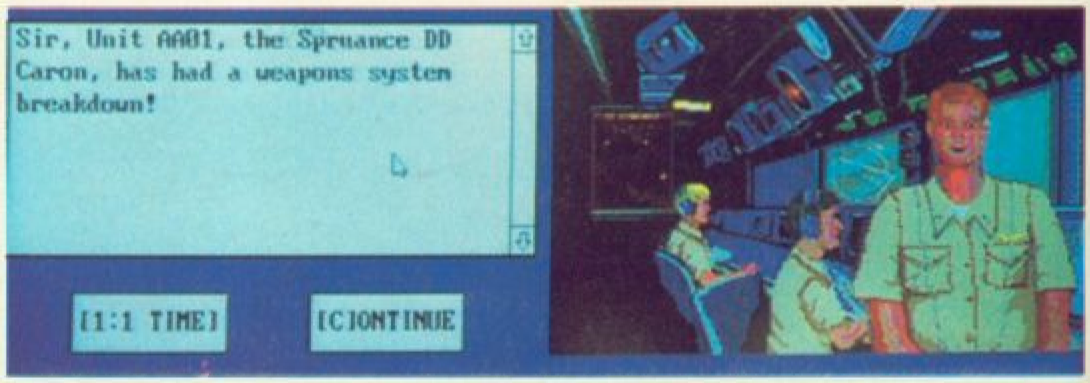
During an attack, a close-up view of the ship is shown and you can view missiles closing in, hopefully for a direct hit to the enemy, or a near miss if the ship is your own

Fortunately there is a staff assistant who takes care of all the menial little tasks for you. He will go as far as to automatically engage enemy missiles and planes with SAMs (Surface to Air guided Missiles) when you are under attack. He also lets you know if you have done something silly like ordered an attack on an enemy craft when it is out of range, and will usually suggest a suitable course of action.

This is probably one of the nicest things about *Harpoon* - the machine looks after the boring mechanics while you take care of the overall strategy. For instance, if you order a helicopter to patrol a particular quadrant in front of your fleet it will do so, then automatically land, refuel, and take off again until you give the order to land.

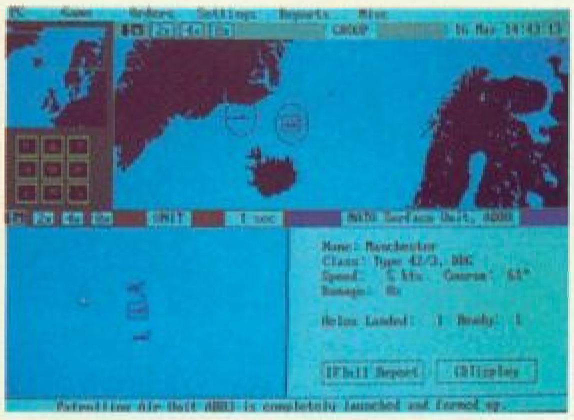


The game is quite bearable in both CGA and medium-resolution EGA modes, as shown above



Sir, Unit AA01, the Spruance DD Caron, has had a weapons system breakdown!

The staff assistant will occasionally report back with information or suggestions. In this case the news is bad – a weapon's breakdown that leaves one ship defenceless



```
Name: Manchester
Class: Type 42/3, DDG
Speed: 5 kts  Course: 61°
Damage: 0%

Helos Landed: 1 Ready: 1
```

```
Patrolling Air Unit A003 is completely launched and formed up.
```

The strategic map shows the whole campaign area

The group map shows each group of craft as a single icon

By default the game runs in real-time, but this can be compressed to speed up game-play

The status panel gives details on the currently selected group (your own or the enemy's).

The message line is used to keep you up to date with events during play. Here you are informed that a helicopter patrol has been launched.

The unit map details one or more craft at close scale. This is most useful during combat.

Arranging the formation of your ships, aircraft, and submarines is done easily using the formation editor. This shows the arrangement of your craft within a series of concentric range circles. It is now simply a matter of moving the craft icons to the quadrants you wish them to occupy. Courses are also easily set by plotting destinations on the group map. It then remains just to set the speeds for individual groups. Having done this you can use the time compression feature to speed up play until something happens which requires your attention. You are automatically notified by your staff assistant at this point and given the option of returning to real-time.

It does not take a long time playing *Harpoon* to realise just how far Naval Warfare as progressed since War World II. I made the mistake of heading straight for targets at full-speed as soon as they had been identified, and then slogging away with all available weapons in a desperate attempt to sink the Soviet ships before they sank me. This, as I discovered to my cost, is entirely the wrong way to fight a modern sea battle.

THE NAME IS BOND... ...LARRY BOND

Larry Bond is not a name that is going to be familiar to many British games players, but it is a name that may well gain some reknown with the release of this product.

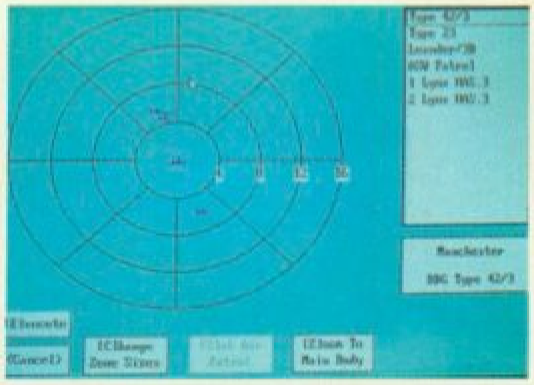
Bond concieved the idea for a realistic table-top simulation of contemporary naval warfare back in 1980, and at was at this time that *Harpoon*, the board game came into existence. Since Bond was a naval officer with a great deal of experience already to his credit, it was hardly surprising that the game was a great success. But Bond had also taken the trouble to integrate as much real data as was available at the time, and continued to do so as more information became available.

Such was the detail and realism of the original game that Tom Clancy used it as an important preparatory source for his famous novel about modern submarines, *The Hunt for Red October*.

Now that *Harpoon* has been produced as a computer simulation it is even more accessible, because the computer takes care of all the tedious mechanics. It is Tom Clancy who sums up the importance of *Harpoon* as a simulation in his Foreword to the game: '*Harpoon* is almost certainly the best naval simulation available to the public. The only games more detailed are classified...'

The emphasis today is not on firepower but stealth. A good commander should attempt to pinpoint the enemy without giving away his own location. His objective is then to strike first and effectively disable or destroy the opposing forces before they have any chance to retaliate, and then withdraw quickly to continue his mission. For this reason, the way that you use your radar and sonar is just as important as getting your ordinance right for the mission your are undertaking.

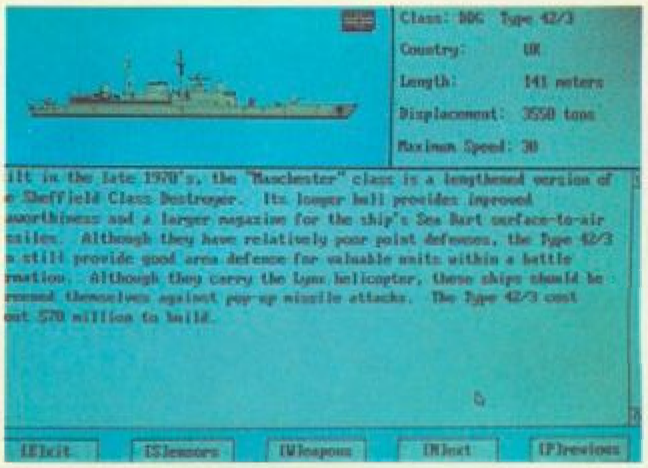
The manner in which detection systems are handled in *Harpoon* is absolutely superb. Enemy craft appear on the map at the central point of their possible location, with the error margin being indicated by a quadrilateral surrounding the icon. As soon as a definite fix on the craft is determined then you are informed by the staff assistant who also gives you a detailed run-down on the type of craft identified.



The formation editor allows you to easily adjust the grouping of your craft

Whether or not you are already familiar with the strategies involved in contemporary naval warfare, *Harpoon* is a superb learning tool, as well as being a thoroughly absorbing simulation. The manual is very comprehensive and also comes with two excellent pamphlets – one detailing Tom Clancy's experiences aboard two soviet ships, and the other a run-down of tactics by the game's author Larry Bond. Additionally there are fact sheets on all the craft which can be called up and examined during play. There is so much to this game that, providing you are interested in the subject-matter, you will find that it provides months of absorbing and educational entertainment. If only alll sims were made this way.

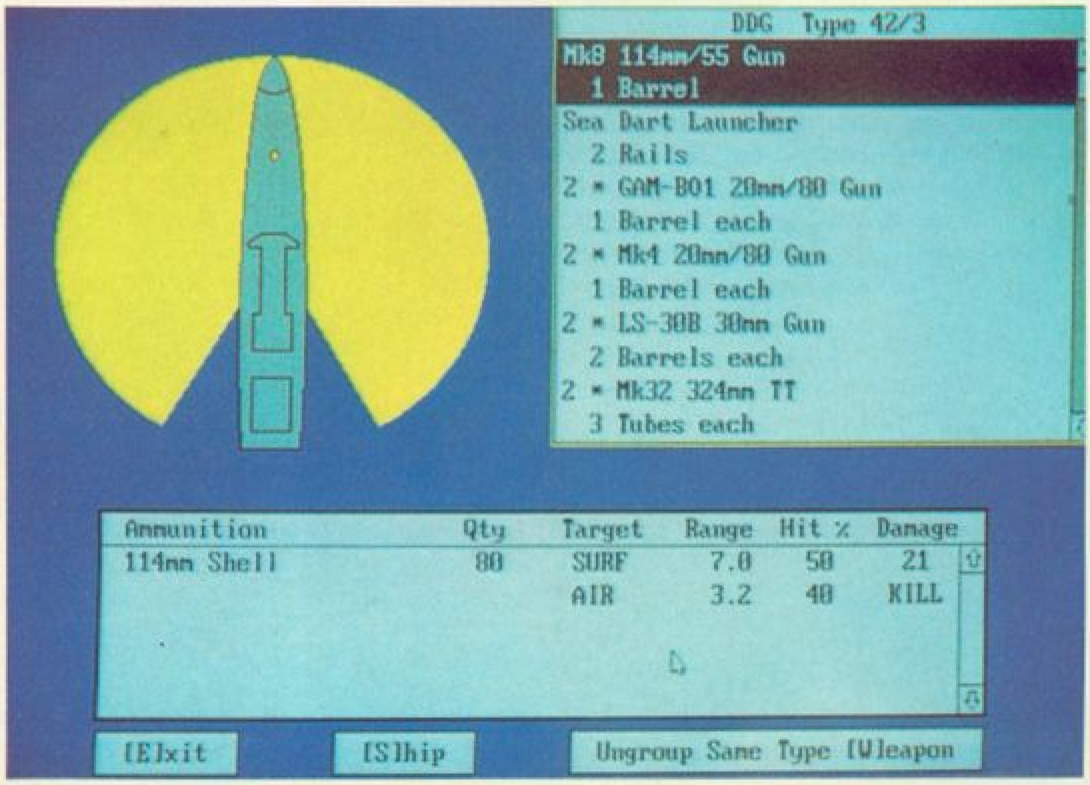
● **Laurence Scotford**



```
Class: DDG  Type 42/3
Country:        UK
Length:         141 meters
Displacement:   3550 tons
Maximum Speed:  30
```

```
ilt in the late 1970's, the "Manchester" class is a lengthened version of
e Sheffield Class Destroyer.  Its longer hull provides improved
aworthiness and a larger magazine for the ship's Sea Dart surface-to-air
ssiles.  Although they have relatively poor point defenses, the Type 42/3
s still provide good area defence for valuable units within a battle
rmation.  Although they carry the Lynx helicopter, these ships should be
rezned themselves against pop-up missile attacks.  The Type 42/3 cost
out $70 million to build.
```

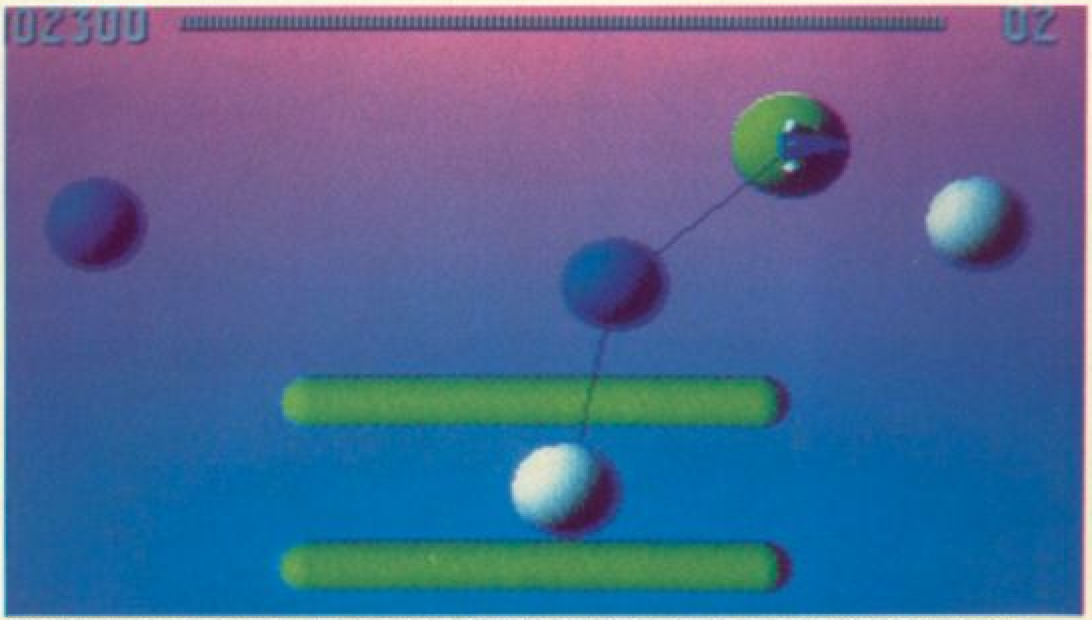
Data sheets on both allied and Soviet craft can be called up at any time during play



```
          DDG  Type 42/3
Mk8 114mm/55 Gun
  1 Barrel
Sea Dart Launcher
  2 Rails
2 * GAM-B01 20mm/80 Gun
  1 Barrel each
2 * Mk4 20mm/80 Gun
  1 Barrel each
2 * LS-30B 30mm Gun
  2 Barrels each
2 * Mk32 324mm TT
  3 Tubes each
```

```
Ammunition        Qty   Target   Range   Hit %   Damage
114mm Shell       80    SURF      7.0     50       21
                        AIR       3.2     40      KILL
```

It is best to review the weapon systems available to you before planning an attack



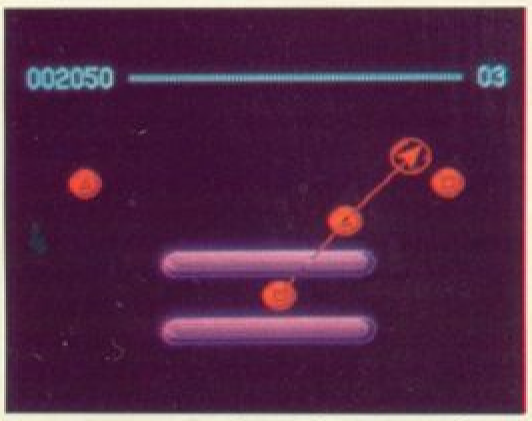
E-Motion on the Amiga. Very nice ray-traced graphics and lots of atmospheric sound to go with them

E-MOTION

US GOLD's latest masterpiece is an arcade style puzzler that makes Newtonian physics look fun

SNOOKER games have proved how much fun there is to be had out of exploiting the laws of physics in a game – even with something as apparently mundane as the motion of a few balls. Now US Gold has managed to bag itself an original piece of software based around Newtonian physics, although for reasons known only to themselves the title and loading picture suggest that the game has more to do with Einstein than with his predecessor.

The idea behind the game is simply to knock spheres around a two-dimensional playing area, using a ball that can be steered, so that spheres of a similar colour collide and cancel each other out. It is most important that spheres of differing colours do not meet, as they will then form another smaller, embryonic ball. Run over this with your own sphere and you will gain extra energy. If you leave embryonic balls for too long, however, they will form full-size spheres that must be eliminated in the normal way.



As you can see, E-Motion on the Spectrum is not quite as colourful as it's 16-bit counterparts, but there is still a good game in there

In the early screens you only have to contend with bars that obstruct the motion of the spheres and cause them to bounce around dangerously. In later stages some of the spheres (possibly including the one you control) are attached by elastic lines which severely effect the motion of all the joined spheres. It is not uncommon for one sphere which is joined to another to disappear off one side of the screen and reappear on the other, still attached, but with a collection of bars separating the two.

The nice thing about E-motion is that it requires a fairly balanced combination of arcade skills and brainwork. Movement of your own sphere is controlled by rotating a pointer within the ball until it indicates the direction that you wish to move in, and then holding the fire button to apply 'thrust' in that direction. You have to keep moving fairly swiftly too. As time goes on, the remaining spheres begin to vibrate – if they are left for too long then they explode draining your energy. If your energy should be exhausted then your own sphere will be atomised (or should that be pixelised?).

The brainwork gets involved every time you reach a new screen. It is certainly not advisable to plough straight in there knocking balls left right and centre. It is far better to sacrifice a bit of time in working out the best way to solve each stage before actually trying anything. Otherwise you will find that one false move could set up a chain of particularly nasty events. Sometimes too, you will find that it actually pays to create additional spheres (in a controlled way of course), but this will require some careful thought first.

E-motion is very much an unclassifiable product. It is quite easy to get to grips with, but very difficult to master, so there is quite a challenge there. It is the sort of product that is unique to computer gaming, and therefore exactly the sort of thing that a computer game should be. If you like games like *Tetris* you will almost certainly have a ball with this one.

● **Laurence Scotford**

ATARI ST

A little less colourful than the Amiga version, and with slightly tinnier sound, but just as playable nonetheless. The background is nicely created with Fourier patterns, making the game look very nice indeed.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8	880

SPECTRUM

This is a little more difficult to play than the other versions because the spheres are all the same colour and are identified by patterns. This doesn't help when the action hots up. The spheres are smaller too. Apart from these factors gameplay is more or less identical – sounds good too.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7	825

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£9.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£TBAdk	IMMINENT

No other versions planned.

PC

Gameplay is more or less identical to the other versions but sound is the usual tacky PC affair. The game caters for CGA (which doesn't look that bad considering the colour limitations), EGA, and VGA – which is just as attractive as any of the other versions reviewed here.

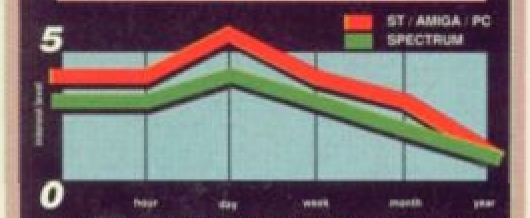
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8	850

AMIGA

This is the most colourful and attractive of the versions we played – 32 colour ray-traced images set against a nice colour-graduated background. The sound is suitably ethereal and, for once, actually adds something to the gameplay.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8	890

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initially this is an intriguing product – unlike anything you've ever seen before. It proves to be very quick to get into, but it will take you several games to master the technique required to clear screens safely.

I'm not convinced that this product has long term staying power. There is not really enough variety in the game play to keep you playing once you have solved most of the screens.

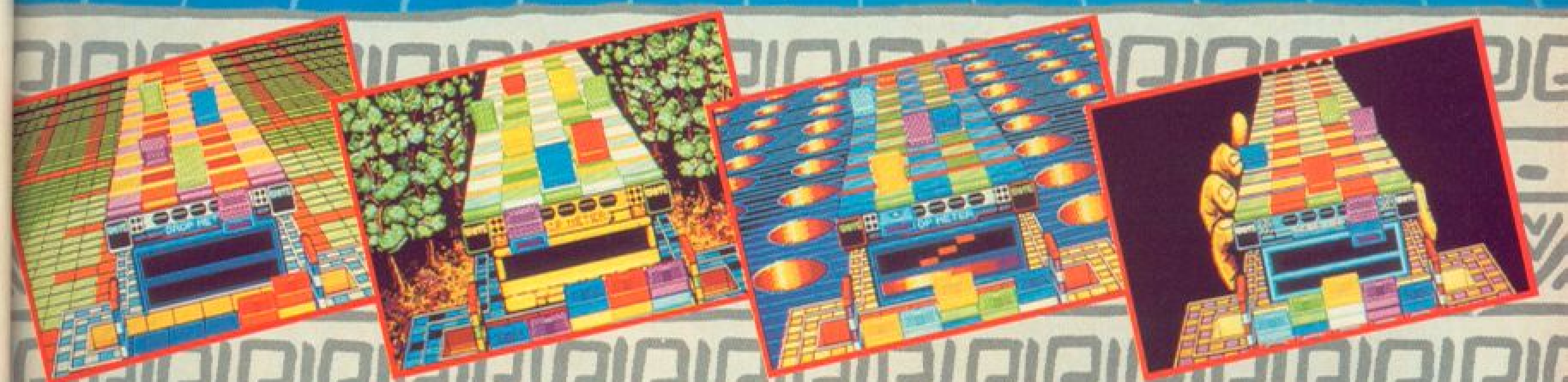
THIS IS THE 90's
THIS IS

KLAX™

THE TIC-TAC TILE GAME

It's simple in concept and easy to play. Catch the coloured tiles with the paddle and flip them into the bins to make same coloured stacks, diagonals and rows of three. Sounds easy? It is! The hard part is pulling yourself away from the game.

- The latest craze from California!
- 99 waves of sheer fun!
- The fastest selling coin-op ever!
- Addictive and challenging.
- Make multiple klaxes for massive points!
- Challenge your friends in head-to-head action.



KLAX
KLAX
TENGEN
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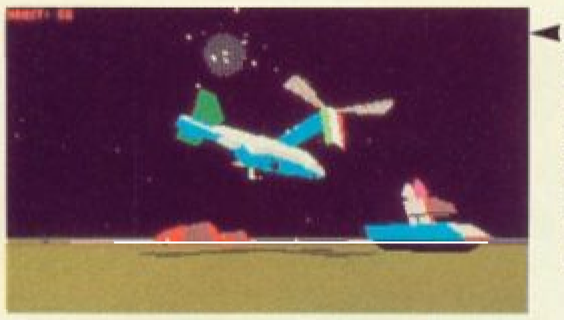
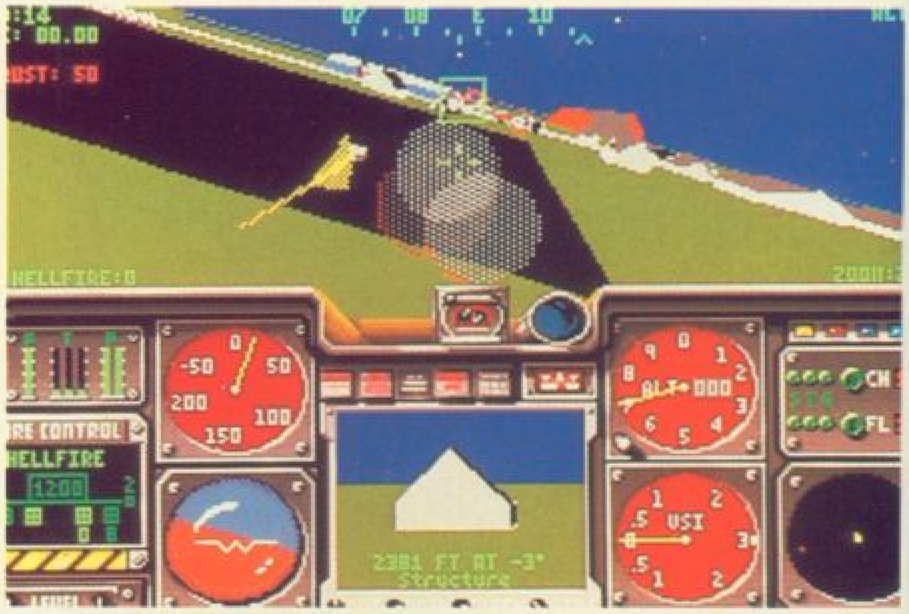
TENGEN
The Name in Coin-Op Conversions

DOMARK

Available on: Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25",
Commodore 64 (cassette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128
Programmed by: Teque Software developments Ltd. Atari ST Screenshots
Published by Domark Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 01-780 2224



LHX has possibly more multiple views than any other program. You can even skulk behind a target and watch the missile's coming straight for you



Each aircraft has its own distinctive cockpit display

LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

Before EA takes off with a new helicopter simulation, Rik Haynes flys a preview...

DEDICATED followers of flight-sim fashion may remember what Microprose did with its simulation of the then unrevealed *B2 Stealth Bomber* – producing a flight-simulation from an educated guess sprinkled with a fair amount of imagination. Now EA is doing a similar thing with the LHX – America's new 'stealth' helicopter – before it has even been seen in public or entered service with US forces! If that wasn't enough, EA has also added the chance to fly the Apache, Blackhawk and Osprey aircraft.

When I visited EA at its office in Langley, I wasn't expecting to see anything too exciting. After the fever-pitch furore of *Populous* and *Deluxe Paint III* last year, EA had settled back down to a steady stream of strategy and productivity releases. However, my enthusiasm soon returned after playing *LHX AC* – it had me hooked so tight I nearly missed out on lunch. And I never miss out on lunch.

LHX AC was running on a PC at 24MHz with a 256-colour card – looking good, feeling great. After going through the usual pregame options such as Tour of Duty location, Mission Category, and Helicopter and Weapon selection, I was ready for some flight-fun. I decided to go on a Surgical Strike in Vietnam flying an AH-64 Apache. This baby is the US Army's current heli-gunship, powered by two 1536shp General Electric T700-700 free-turbine turbo-shafts with a 30mm Chain Gun slung under its nose for that little something extra.

Although a heli-veteran of *Choplifter*, *Fort Apocalypse* and *Gunship* pedigree, it still took me a few minutes to find my air-legs again. But I was soon airborne and heading for my date with an enemy bunker. For a laugh I tried some of the different view options of my Apache after I'd got a fix on the bunker: side-on, head-on, on-back, ground-swivel and the really weird spinning-around. Suddenly I flew over a ground vehicle. Luckily it was one of mine, a humble M113 personnel transport. Time to drop some height and get acquainted with my Apache's armaments. I switched through Hellfire anti-tank missiles, FFAR rockets, Stinger air-to-air missiles and my trusty 30-mil Chain Gun.

Two min's into action and I encountered my first adversary. No problem, just a Soviet T-72 Main Battle Tank with only a remote-controlled 12.7mm machine gun for AA (Anti-Aircraft) protection. The Apache is designed to withstand hits of any type of ammunition up to 23mm calibre. OK, lock-on, magnify display, flick to Hellfire, and press the button. For a novel twist, let's run with the missile – *LHX AC* gives you the viewpoint option to 'fly on the back' of your ordnance. Splashed down and squashed dead, deduct one T-72 from the next inventory.

By this time I was on the enemy base, a quick fly-over and I was worried. A lot of installations and I couldn't lock on to the bunker. Simple solution: FFAR rocket saturation of the whole area, blast everything not bolted down with superglue. I turned, and went in low. Devastation derby, the bunker took some hits but was the only surviving piece of real-estate. Then my real headache abruptly began. I was taking hits from someone determined to down me. Instrument panels started to crack on my cockpit display, flight controls became unresponsive. I was losing it, and losing it fast. Fire some chaff and flare rounds – no good. A quick scan of the sky produced an enemy Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunship on my case – it was locked and stung within 10 seconds. It wasn't over though, I was still getting an unrelenting pounding from someone else.

Time had run out for me. As I span towards the ground at a helter-skelter pace, I noticed a tracked vehicle to my far right. I couldn't scan it – that facility had been terminated over 20 seconds ago, along with all my weapon systems. I was going down and there was no stopping it, so I headed for an enemy tower – at least I'd take something out in my exit from this 3D polygon gamescape. Instant impact, and it was all over in a blaze of simultaneous tower-Apache explosions. As I watched my bird break up, I was finally able to eyeball my killer – it was a ZSU-23-4 Quad 23mm self-propelled AA gun. I'd now learnt this radar-aided beast would require a higher kill-priority on my future missions – the trouble is, I'd learnt it the hard way.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC	£39.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£TBAdk	TBA
ATARI ST	£TBAdk	TBA

No other versions planned.

TOP SECRET

Please destroy yourself after reading the following.

LHX (Light Helicopter Experimental)
Type: Scout/Attack (SCAT) helicopter
Crew: 1
Range: 1425km
Max. level speed: 330km/h at sea level

In 1982 the US Army asked a selection of defence manufacturers to design a 'stealth' helicopter. This helicopter would have a single pilot, high survivability on the battlefield, advanced composite structures in the rotor blades and fuselage, and FBW (fly-by-wire) or FBL (fly-by-light) flight controls. To help give the LHX high survivability, designers have replaced the traditional helicopter tail rotor with a tail fan which is less susceptible to small arms damage. For techno-warfare fans here's a quick spec run-down of the LHX: ADOCS (Advanced Digital/Optical Control System) technology, triply-redundant electronic flight control system, low observable RAM (Radar Absorbent Material) coating, advanced IR (Infrared) suppression, 20mm auto-cannon with 2000 rounds of ammo, internal and external fixed-wing ordnance storage of AIM-9L Sidewinder or Stinger air-to-air missiles, Hellfire or TOW anti-tank missiles, and 57mm FFAR (Folding Fin Aerial Rocket) rounds. Although the LHX has yet to enter service or been seen in public, EA has used a wealth of general knowledge about the helicopter to create this simulation.

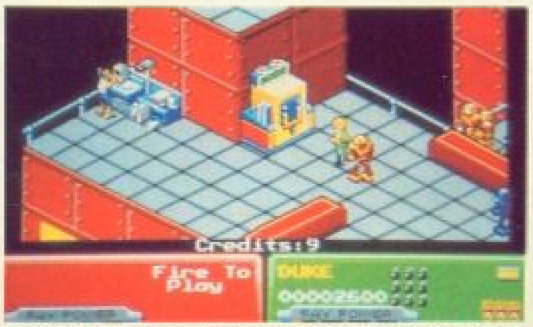
ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

Classic Sci-Fi is revived on your screens in DOMARK/TENGEN's latest coin-op conversion

YOUR task, as either of the muscle-bound heroes Jake and Duke, is to fight your way through factory levels full of mechanical men, rescuing human prisoners, killing off the evil Reptilons you encounter, and finally coming face to face with... well, you'll have to play through the game to find out what.

The battle takes place on a series of colourful isometric three-dimensional levels. Each is populated by a variety of robots ranging from the laughable, but deadly, Weetabix men to tiny little robot buggies which can only be shot by crouching.

It is very important to rescue as many slaves as possible (by running into them) because for each shuttle-load you collect you get another unit of life (and let me tell you, you need it). Transport between levels is achieved by escalator, but before you can use it you must find the power switch and throw it on. There are also points to be had for destroying as much of the factory equipment as possible.



Heading for the escalator switch you are already hampered by robots. To your left is a slave waiting to be saved

Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters is a superb conversion, colourful, fast, and great fun (especially with two players).

● Laurence Scotford

RELEASE BOX

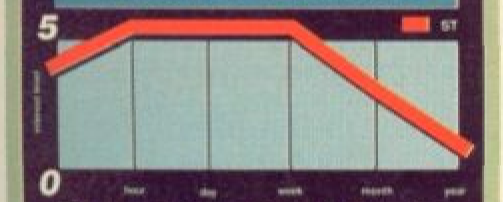
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	LATE APRIL
AMIGA	£19.99dk	LATE APRIL
SPECTRUM	£9.99cs•£12.99dk	LATE APRIL
C64/128	£9.99cs•£12.99dk	LATE APRIL
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs £12.99dk	LATE APRIL
PC	£24.99dk	LATE APRIL

ATARI ST

There is nothing particularly spectacular about this game on the graphics front, but then there doesn't really need to be. Gameplay is highly addictive and should have you coming back for more time and time again. Unfortunately the soundtrack was not quite ready at the time of going to press, but we'll fill you in on how it

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	9	895

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This is the sort of game that has immediate audio-visual impact, and is easy to get into gameplay wise. It is also the sort of game you will want to play and play until you are sick of it. Once you manage to play through the whole lot you are not really likely to come back to it again.

KLAX

DOMARK/TENGEN put up a rival to the *Tetris* arcade puzzle crown

TETRIS is a remarkable product in a couple of respects. It is about as simple as an arcade game can hope to get, and it doesn't rely on fancy graphics and sound for its appeal, just highly addictive gameplay. *Klax* is a superficially similar product which shares these qualities, and is just as enjoyable to play.

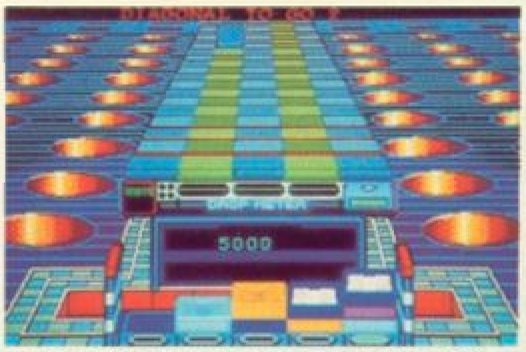
It must be said that *Klax* is not simply a *Tetris* clone. The skills and planning you have to use are of an altogether different nature. You control a paddle which moves back and forth along the bottom of a rectangular playing area divided into five lanes. Along these lanes tiles of different colours spin slowly towards you. You must catch them on the paddle and then flip them onto one of five stacks at the bottom of the screen. Your aim is to make a Klax – three colours in a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal line.

Obviously vertical lines are the easiest to make, so they only score a measly 50 points, whereas horizontal lines score 1000 and diagonal lines score a massive 5000 points. To win each round you are given a specific task which could be anything from surviving a set number of tiles to creating several diagonal Klaxes. A round is lost when you drop too many tiles, so you can't just let the ones you don't want fall off the edge of the playing area.

Each stack will only hold five tiles, so you must be very careful about where you place them. Fortunately your paddle can hold up to five tiles at once, although the tile you catch first will be the last one to be released and vice versa. If things get too hectic you can also flip tiles back up the screen to give you some breathing space.

Although *Klax* is undoubtedly inspired by Tetris it is original enough to carve a niche of its own. If anything it requires more thought and forward planning than the former game, so it should appeal to arcade fans who like to exercise the grey matter a little bit. Well worth a look if you like this sort of thing.

● Laurence Scotford



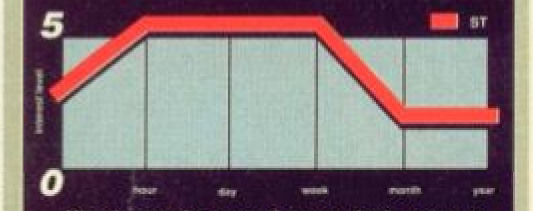
Got One! That diagonal line of blues is worthj a tasty 5000 points!

ATARI ST

This game is characterised by its humorous animation and fast, frantic gameplay. There is a nifty soundtrack playing throughout, and even your laser shots seem to pulse to the beat. A superbly playable conversion that is great fun in one-player mode, and even better in two.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	5	ACE RATING
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	9	880

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Klax is not the sort of game that's going to knock your socks off the minute you get it out of the box. But it will grow on you quickly. Once you've got into this game you are unlikely to put it down for a while, and even when you do get bored of it you are still likely to come back to it every now and then. Having different tasks to complete each round adds to the game's long term interest.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	LATE APRIL
AMIGA	£19.99dk	LATE APRIL
SPECTRUM	£9.99cs•£12.99dk	LATE APRIL
C64/128	£9.99cs•£12.99dk	LATE APRIL
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs £12.99dk	LATE APRIL
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... IS ABOUT TO HIT THE WORLD ...

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In 1982, Kevin Toms wrote Football Manager, six years (and half a million copies sold) later, Kevin went one better and produced Football Manager 2. A response to the ideas of thousands and thousands of Football Manager fans for an improved game. Football Manager 2 has, like its ancestor, proved a stunning success, a game with appeal that will last for years, more than satisfying old fans but creating new ones.

With the success of Football Manager 2, have come more suggestions for an even better game. Kevin has responded with "Football Manager: World Cup Edition", a game that takes management into the international arena, with all the thrills of world cup competition, a game that takes the unique components of its two ancestors and radically improves them a game that will better the best.

Kevin Tom

Free

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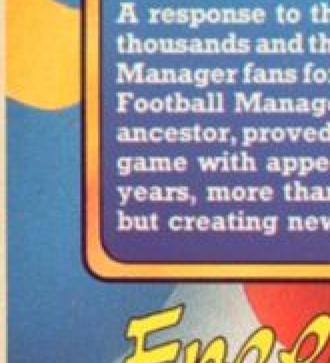

Keep up to date during the World Cup this summer with your own special Football Manager Wall Chart.

WIN FABULOUS PRIZES IN OUR WORLD CUP COMPETITION

Prizes include: • Your picture with Kevin Toms on the packaging of Football Manager 3. • Holiday Tickets of your choice. • Signed Footballs.

"I have been studying football tactics and interviewing professional managers. This new game will bring you the results – more tactical management, more realism, and more playability. I've done my best to give you the most entertaining game possible."

Good Lu

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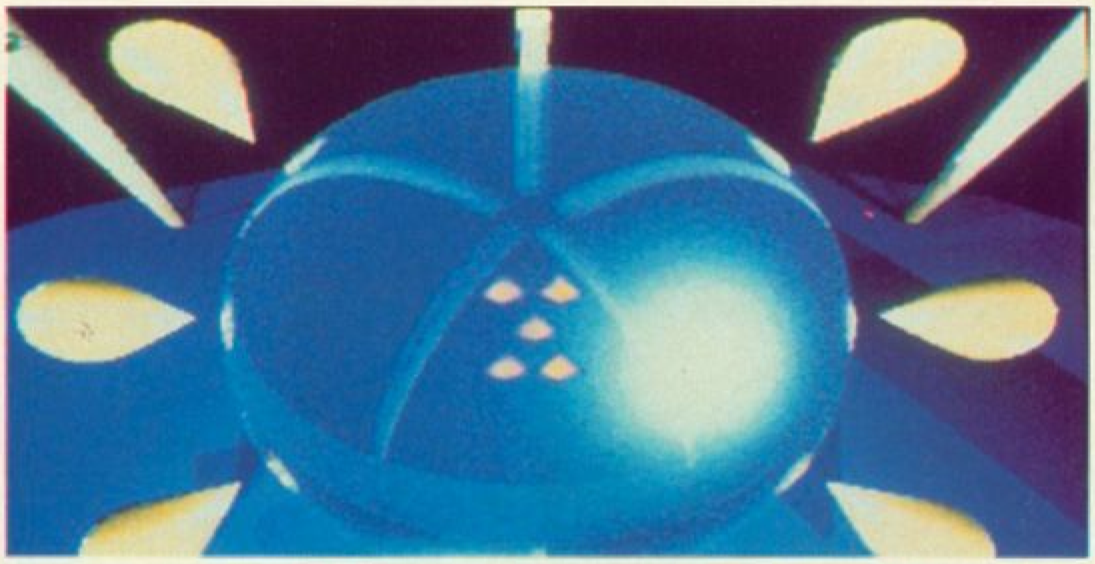
Addictive
LIVE THAT DREAM

Prism Leisure Corporation Plc, Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ.



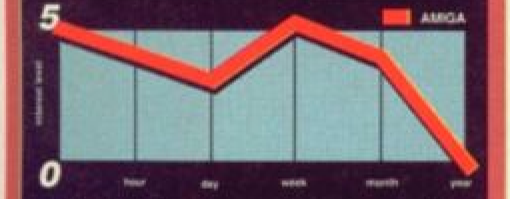
KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALLION

US GOLD bring you the world's first culture simulator

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
Includes musicassette of soundtrack		
No other versions planned.		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



After initially being wowed by the graphics and soundtrack, you will suffer a little confusion as you adapt to the way the game elements all hang together. It will not take long, however, before you begin to really get into the swing of things and start making some progress. Sooner, or later the novelty is bound to wear off and then you are likely to move onto other things.

AMIGA

On the audio-visual side alone this game is truly breathtaking. From the moment that intro sequence begins you know that you are in for a treat. The soundtrack is the most distinctive piece of computer music I've heard since Infogrames' *Quest for the Time Bird*. On the game-play front there are no disappointments either.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING 935
AUDIO	10	FUN FACTOR	8	

CULTURE has to be the most complex system that has anyone has ever claimed to simulate, so what is this product all about? The game comprises several sub-games which are all based around the Oridrim culture, a people who have settled in a city carved from the bones of a ancient creature known as the Orodrid.

Ordirim culture is based mainly around trading – with large families being responsible for different trades. The Oridrim society is largely self-supporting so most trading is done between families, but there are occasional ventures in trade with other peoples, known derisively by the Oridrim as Mudders.

This scene within the Tsimit shows how beautiful the game's graphics can be

As a head of one of these families it is your responsibility to manage your family's affairs. This part of the game involves establishing prices for your own goods and buying goods from other traders. You must also decide whether to invest in attempts to establish new markets amongst the Mudders and how much to contribute towards aiding families who have suffered losses of one kind or another.

This sub-game works very much like a typical strategy/management type game, in that decisions are made on a season by season basis with the effects of those decisions only really becoming apparent over a long period of time.

Your ultimate aim is not just to keep your family living as luxuriously as possible – there are other aspects to Orodrim culture which require your attention. Within the skull of the Orodrid is the Tsimit, a sacred place which houses the Orodrim priests. They guard the fossilised crystals which are all that remain of the Orodrid's brain cells. Some of these crystals, when correctly nurtured, will hatch into a Crystallion – an intelligent crystal horse. Your goal is to form a bond with one such creature and become a Knight of the Crsytallion and a leader of the city.

An essential part of your quest for a Crystallion is the trial of the Tsimit. The Keepers of the Tsimit will provide you with a Crystallion suit which carries three charges, each of which will protect you from death once. You must now enter the twisting passages of the maze at the bottom of the Tsimit and collect as many crystals as you can. But there are also other creatures roaming the maze whose contact is deadly, and which also have the annoying habit of carrying off the crystal you are after.

Fortunately you are armed with a powerful pulse weapon. This can be fired quickly to destroy the hostile creatures or slowly to illuminate your way through dark chambers. It is essential to collect as many crystals as you can and then escape form the Tsimit before you are killed by the creatures that roam there. There are seven veils of the Tsimit that must be successfully passed through before you can hatch your Crystallion. This will mean repeated visits, and the only way to ensure entry is by contributing some of your savings to the Tsimit.

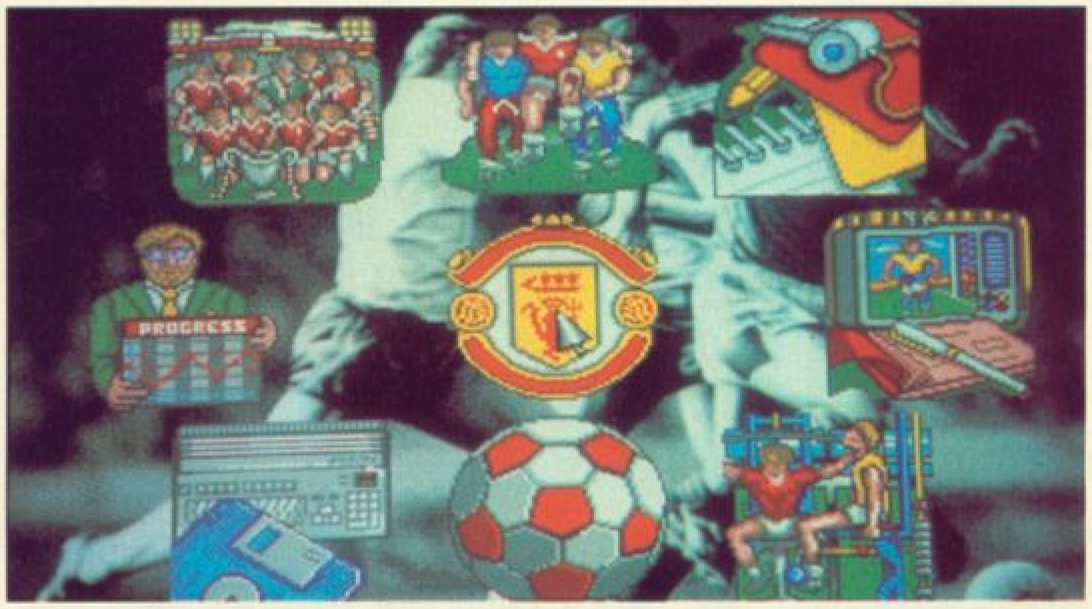
You can use crystals you have collected to generate more life-saving charges for your suit by taking them to the Proda and using them to generate charges in strange objects known as Prods.

There are two games specific to Orodrim Culture which must be mastered to assure your success. These are *Deketa*, a card game based on Pairs which is used to build up your ESP, and *Bosu* a board game bearing a faint resemblance to *Nine Men's Morris*, which requires a similar sort of strategic thinking to *Reversi*.

Knights of the Crystallion certainly gets full marks for originality. The distinctive (and at times beautiful) graphics and the haunting soundtrack give the game plenty of atmosphere. I wasn't too sure how I felt about this product at first, but having spent some time getting used to the individual elements it turned out to be a highly entertaining and absorbing piece of software, and I was quite sorry to have to leave it to write this review. A startling game which will appeal to anybody who is looking for an original product with plenty of depth.

ACE RATED 935

● **Laurence Scotford**



Manchester United - superb animated menu screen.

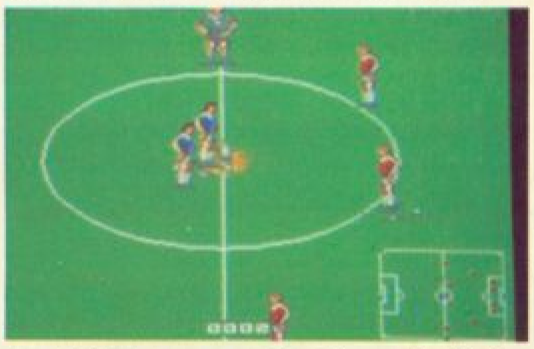
MANCHESTER UNITED

The official licensed football title from KRISALIS looks set to uphold a great tradition...

WHERE is the scramble for football licenses going to end? With all the top teams now snapped up, will we start to see a bargain basement division emerging with teams like Bristol Rovers appearing on the Mastertronic label? Whatever happens, there's no doubt that Krisalis are going to take an early lead through Brian Robson and his boys. Competent in every department, *Manchester United* features lots of graphical frills and extras to make for a pretty, as well as challenging soccer game. The scenario follows the recent trend of combining a heavy degree of management responsibilites with a full league program of arcade matches and cup ties.

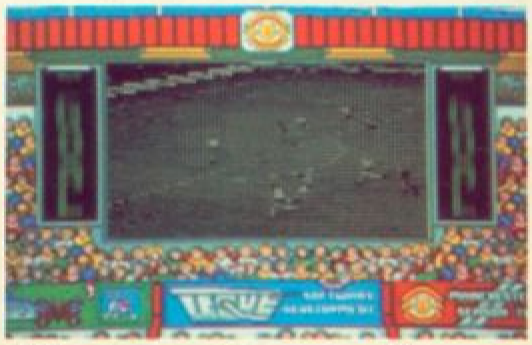
The arcade section compares favourably with other soccer games on the market, beating most but not quite outplaying the definitive *Kick Off.* The graphics certainly help – the players are realistically animated and large enough for you to make out their physical shape and all of the colours of the strips, which are also scrupulously accurate both home and away.

The control method is novel – using the fire button as a strength determinant for shots and passes. Hold it down for more power or use a quick, sharp press for a snap shot or a chip. The 'chip' mode is particularly good. No other soccer game allows you to chip the goalie and pick out precision Hoddle-like long passes. On the negative side, the shooting system does not facilitate volleys or controlled, measured cracks at goal from outside the box.



Man United go two up against Liverpool with minutes to go – good job its only a game.

When goals are scored you are treated to a replay on the giant screen at Old Trafford. This looks impressive at first – like watching old footage of a celebrated Stanley Mathews netting, scored in some classic campaign before the Boer War. But it seems to bear no resemblance to the goal just scored and becomes simply annoying after a while.



Action replay screen - bears no resemblance to the goal just scored.

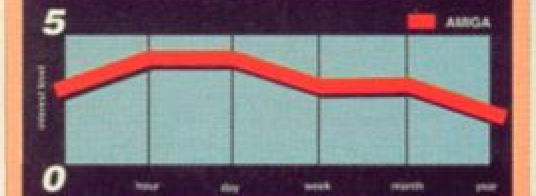
This is the only criticism of the countless Cinemaware-style graphical treats that are crammed into the game. Most of them are good fun and serve a useful purpose. The progress screen for example is excellent – giving a report in the Daily Sport of Manchester United's league progress. You are also treated to a live broadcast of the draw for the FA Cup if you get through to the next round, and can dabble in the transfer market. In addition you can organise training and experiment with differen formations.

Football mangement fans who like a challenge will also relish studying the form of players, scheduling appropriate training, dealing with injuries, buying and selling (You would expect to do plenty of that at Old Trafford and the game doesn't disappoint), and picking the team.

The manual is obviously written by a fan - and why not. The historical blurb makes much of the glory days – George Best, Bobby Charlton, and the Busby Babes but strangely doesn't mention the Michael Knighton affair. This is a must for Man United fans everywhere and is also recommended to anyone who just wants a good footy game to play on their computer.

● Eugene Lacey

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A bit of disk swapping is unavoidable with all those graphical delights in the presentation screens. This doesn't detract too much from the enjoyment though. Good long term entertainment is guaranteed. You can tackle a full league and cup campaign – saving your position as you go. Bound to be loaded on a regular basis every time you fancy a kick around.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT

No other versions planned.

AMIGA

Manchester United scores highly in the graphics department. The sound lacks a little imagination – a few muffled crowd shouts and the inevitable referee's whistle. External disk drive owners will miss out on some irksome disk swapping. Good performance from Krisalis - does both the Amiga and MUFC proud.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	8
AUDIO	6	**FUN FACTOR**	7

ACE RATING **845**

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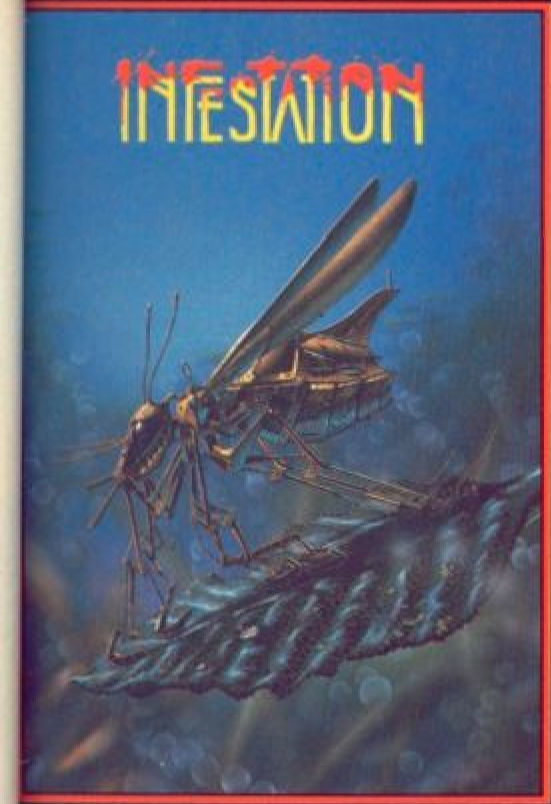

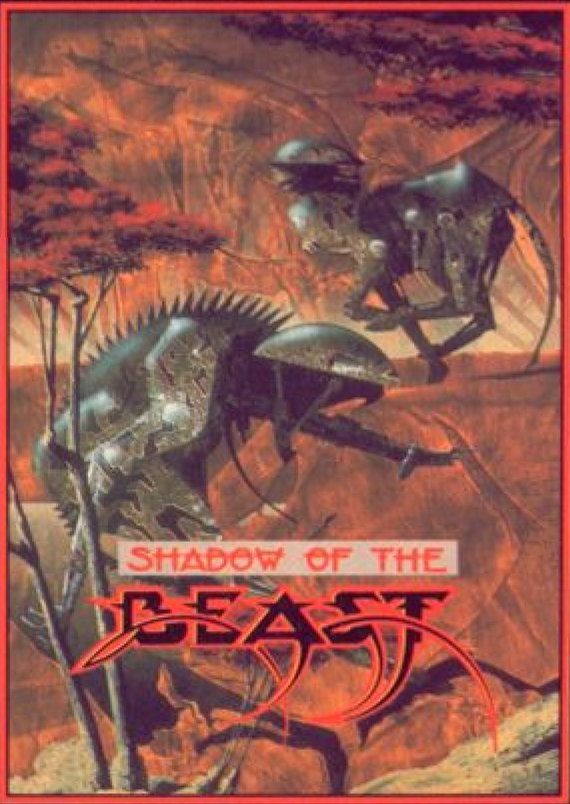

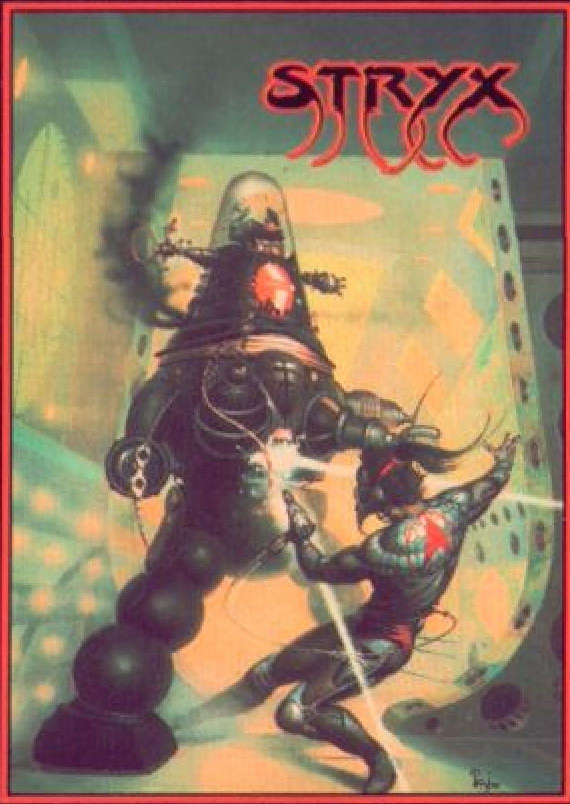

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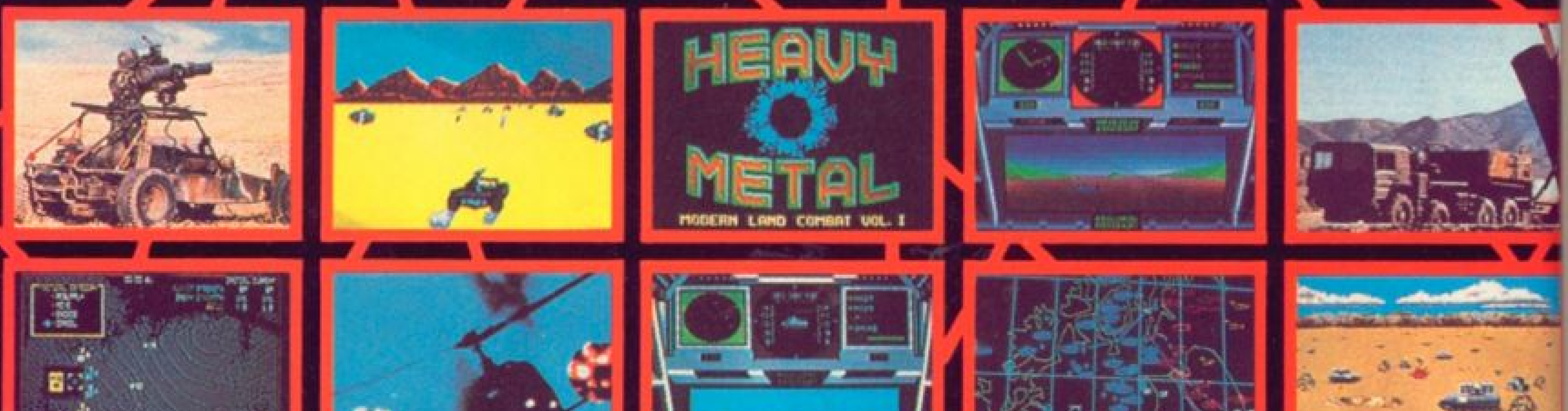
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METAL
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Screenshots from various formats

U.S. Gold Ltd, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 625 3388.

INFESTATION

INFESTATION borrows more than a bit of the plot from Aliens to set the scene for its solid 3D vector graphics encounter with 'orrible aliens on the Space Station Alpha II.

But don't expect Sigourney Weaver. You are Kal Solar and your mission is to land on the planet Xelos where the crew of the station Alpha II have been massacred by some mysterious alien force.

PSYGNOSIS hatch a virulent alien swarm

The aliens are multiplying like galactic rabbits, stealthily spreading their eggs and spores around the base – in its ventilation ducts and air conditioning corridors. The only way stop them is to seal them inside their incubation areas and inject a deadly dose of cyanide gas. Just to make sure none of the eggs survive you must then seek out the base's Power Generator that is tapping power from the moon's core. Set it to achieve critical mass and then escape before it blows.

What Kal's mission briefing doesn't tell him is that the planet Xelos where Alpha II is situated has been overrun with hostile life forms. And if that wasn't enough, Protector Droids that are completely out of control and will kill anything that moves are swarming all over the place. Just getting into the base is going to be a battle before you even set eyes on the real alien enemy.

There are two methods of exploring Xelos – walk around it in the space suit or fly over it in the Manned Manoeuvre Unit (MMU). There are a number of items to be found and objects to identify before you can hope to sort out the aliens. Infestation is as much a game of adventure and exploration as a simple shoot out with the aliens. Like *Mercenary* and *Damocles* the player has to find items and learn how to use them to succeed. A useful alien interrogation screen lets you flick through a series of animated pictures of these so that you know what to look out for when you land on Xelos.

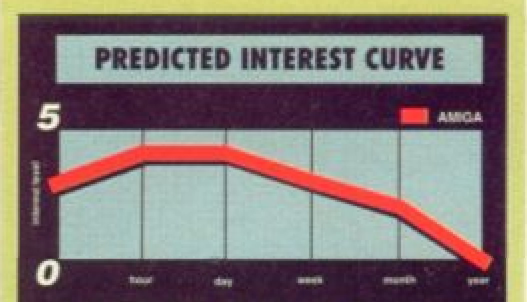
First, however, you have to Log on to a Network Terminal and use it to activate the transporter system. Now you can go below ground and start exploring the base itself. This is where the real fun begins.

Kal needs to use all of his equipment to the full to safely explore the alien lair. The suit's helmet has four functions – Oxygen showing how much you have left, Temperature, Radiation, and Compass. The Head up Display features a further seven functions to keep Kal posted on: his inventory (Items carrying with him), Status (Number of eggs destroyed), Additional navigational equipment, Life Support, Scratch Pad Sights, Avionics, and Atmospheric Analysis.

The latter is particularly important. The rate at which oxygen is used up is vital. All the time you are exploring you can hear the sound of breathing through the canisters connected to the helmet. Sometimes, however, you can take your visor up and breath the air on the planet (or in the base) if your indicators tell you it is safe to do so, thereby preserving valuable oxygen. If you are lucky you may also be able to boost your oxygen supplies – and therefore the time left to you – by stumbling upon Oxygen Canisters at the beginning of the game.

Great boasts about the quality of the 3D graphics are made in the manual. They were, it appears, 'specifically developed for 16 bit machines'. Is there a bull in here somewhere? OK they may be, but they're certainly not exceptional. They do, however, bear some comparison with Mercenary in that the play area can be explored in real time with consistent views in all directions. Remembering where you are going and what you have seen is pretty crucial too as there is very little time to complete the mission.

The best bit is the opening sequence – where Kal is seen zooming across the surface of Xelos in his space suit. The moonlight on the surface of the planet as he touches down makes for a breathtaking space-scape.



A bit difficult to get into. It will take you a while to learn how to explore the planet without running out of oxygen. However, once you master the controls and work out what you are supposed to be doing there is a good, challenging game here. Unfortunately, it is the sort of game that, once completed, loses its interest totally. That's arcade adventures for you....

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned.		

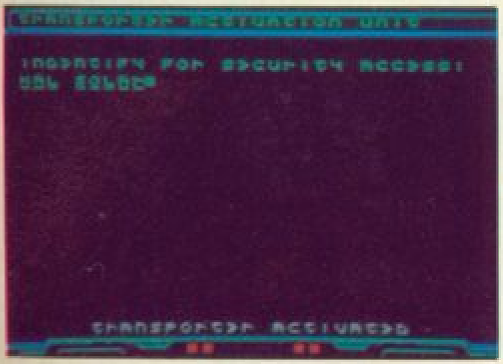
AMIGA

Infestation features one of the best Amiga intro screens ever. Watching Kal Solar zooming over the planet Xelos is like watching a highly sophisticated piece of computerised cartoon animation. Graphically neat – though not in the Damocles class. Sound effects make good use of he Amiga – particularly neat are the breathing sounds as Kal struggles for breath inside his space suit.

				ACE RATING
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	9	720
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7	

Infestation may be a little impenetrable at first – a fact not helped by the manual which leaves too much unexplained. It is worth a bit of perseverance though. Once you get into the station you soon start to lose your self in it though and will find it extremely rewarding.

● Eugene Lacey

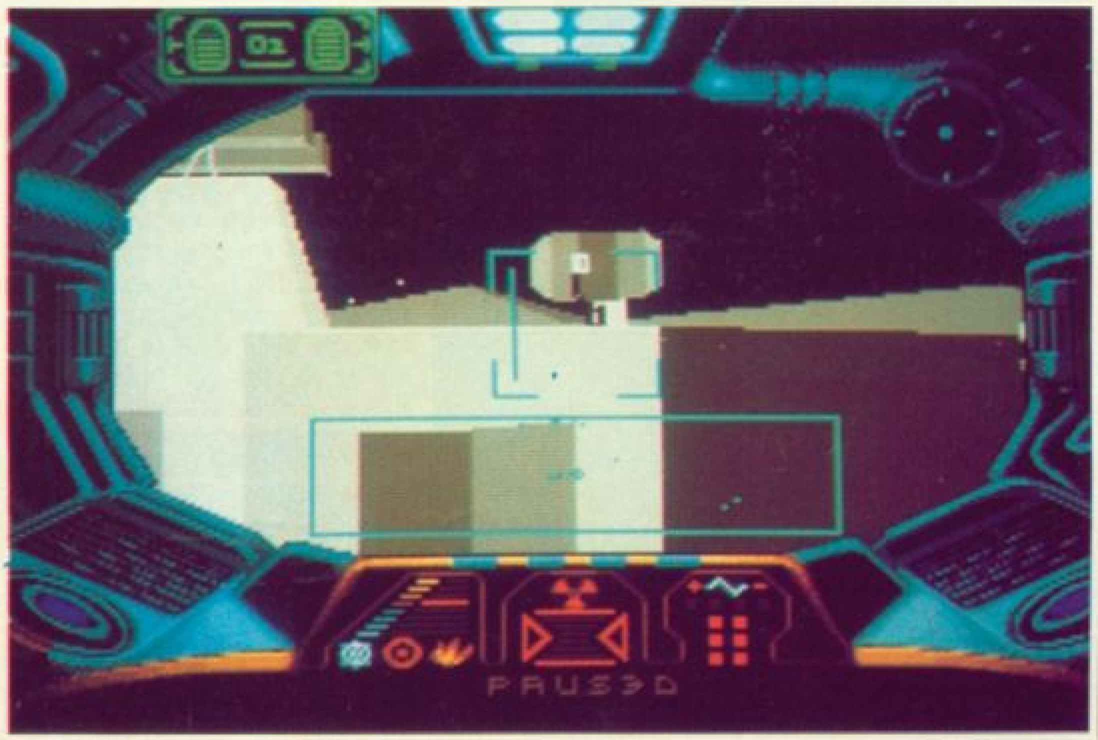


TRANSPORTER ACTIVATION UNIT

IDENTIFY FOR SECURITY ACCESS:
KAL SOLAR

TRANSPORTER ACTIVATED

Kal Solar logs onto the Security Computer.



Searching for the entrance to the doomed Alpha II station.

GOLDEN OLDIES

Everyone enjoys listening to the latest Simply Red album, but don't you find that there are times when when want to bung on a nice bit of classic Fleetwood Mac (especially if it's available on CD), turn up the volume, sit back, and remember the good old days?

So why shouldn't it be the same with software? *ACE* readers will always be interested in the latest up-to-the-minute state-of-the-art releases, but they are also discerning enough to be able to recognise a classic game when they see one and to want to play it again... when they've upgraded to the latest piece of techno-wizardry.

Now publishers seem to be sitting up and taking notice of the games playing public and reproducing classic games on the latest machines. Witness this months releases of *Renaissance* (a compilation of classic arcade games) and the first 16-bit version of *Manic Miner* (one of the best 8-bit games ever written).

ACE
on the line

But we think it is time that *ACE* readers were allowed to voice their collective opinion on the future of Golden Oldies. The question that we would like you to consider is this:

Should software companies be investing time and money in developing new versions of classic games on the latest machines?

You can let us know your opinion by dialling one of the following numbers depending on whether you wish to regester a **yes** or **no** vote.

0898 400 784 – Yes, let's see more releases of classic arcade and 8-bit games on 16-bit machines and the machines yet to come.

0898 400 785 – No thanks, I'd much rather have time and money invested in brand new state-of-the-art software.

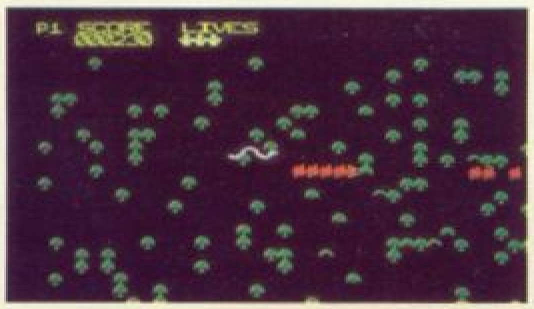
Remember that your votes could influence the future of the entertainment software industry. This is your opportunity to have **your say** and make sure that **tomorrow** you can buy the software that **you want**. Next month we will announce the definitive *ACE* opinion to the industry. So don't delay – vote today!

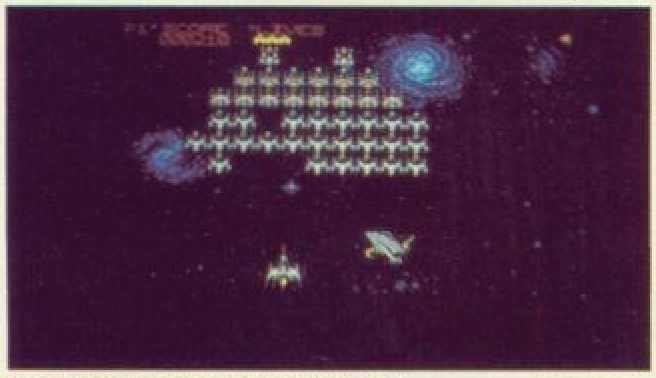
•Lines are open 24 hours a day. Calls are charged at the rate of 38p per minute peak and 25p per minute off-peak.

RENAISSANCE

IMPRESSIONS try invoking a little nostalgia and discover that fings ain't wot they used ta be

REMEMBER the old days? When you could play coin-ops for 10p? When *Asteroids* and *Space Invaders* were the hottest releases, and machines like *Defender* were still only a twinkle in a designer's eye? If you do get all starry eyed at the thought of monochrome vector graphics and simple one-channel sound then the idea behind *Renaissance* should appeal to you.





The classic versions of Centipede, and Galaxians...

Impressions have taken four classic coin-ops: *Space Invaders*, *Centipede*, *Galaxians*, and *Asteroids*, and produced two games for each. One approximates to the original, the other is a contemporary version with updated graphics and sound, and added features.

Since those classic coin-ops began swallowing innumerable ten pence pieces there have been more clones on more machines than I care to think of, ranging from laughably pathetic attempts to capture the playability of the originals to versions that actually manage to surpass the qualities of the games that inspired them.

By providing two versions of both games, Impressions have tried to please everybody, but while this is a brave attempt at invoking nostalgia, it doesn't really cut the mustard.

Playing the copies of the original game one finds that all those little tricks and tactics you used to use are no longer applicable. Obviously, because of copyright reasons, Impressions could not make either the gameplay, graphics, or sound exactly the same as the original, but this does rather mar the attempt. The *Centipede* clone, *Megapede*, suffers the most since you can't use the mouse to manoeuvre, and we all know how limited the joystick is as a trakball substitute.

The contemporary versions are more or less the same game with pretty backgrounds, nicer sprites, and a bit more animation thrown in for good measure. There are also extra nasties to beware of, but these don't really change the games substantially.

Renaissance is a good idea, which has been attractively presented and does what it sets out to do fairly competently, but have Impressions forgotten that there are absolutely superb

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AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
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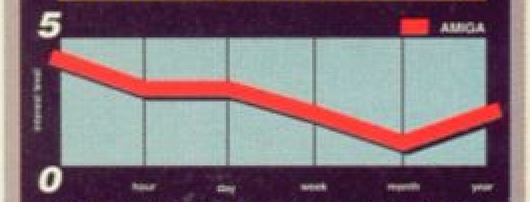
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



You will initially be quite excited by the prospect of playing these classic games again, but will probably disappointed by the implementation. The contemporary versions are not likely to revive your interest either, as they don't really offer much over and above prettier graphics and more sound.

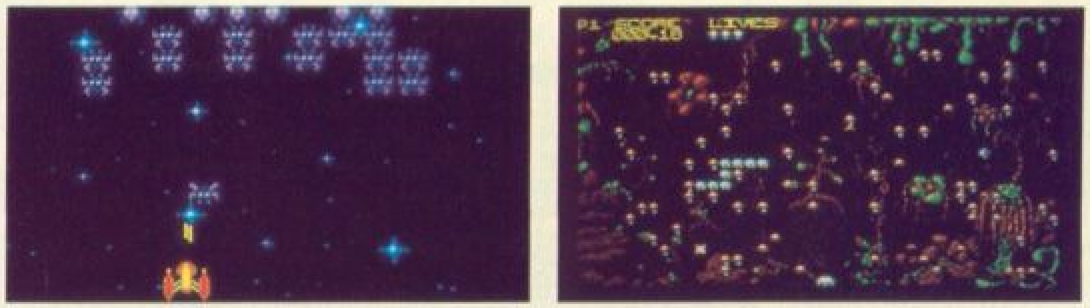
This is the sort of product that you are going to put down fairly quickly, but come back to for the odd game over a period of time.

AMIGA

Hmmm... Well, the classic versions are obviously reasonably close to the graphics and sounds available on the original machines (though not exact replicas), but it has to be said that the contemporary versions don't really stretch the machine in any way. Even so, the presentation is quite neat and there is a nice title soundtrack from David Whittaker. Not a bad compilation, but not breath-taking either.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**2**	ACE RATING
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**	**650**

versions of all these games available as Public Domain software? You could pick up equivalent classics for around £8 the lot. Having said that, if you enjoyed the original games and haven't already acquired versions for your machine then you should be able to squeeze some entertainment out of this collection.


...And Impression's contemporary versions: Megapede, and Draxians

MANIC MINER

SOFTWARE PROJECTS answer 16-bit gamers' prayers and re-release a classic 8-bit title in both old and new clothing

ONE of the more frequent subjects of discourse between 16-bit owners these days seems to be a longing for good conversions of classic 8-bit games. Only last month we printed a letter from a reader who missed "the 'golden oldies' such as *Jet Set Willy*", and went on to ask 'is there such a thing as a simple shoot 'em up anymore?"

It is a sad fact that as games have become more sophisticated in terms of graphics, sound, and size they have often lost the playability and addictiveness which were common features of the best 8-bit games. Companies like Ultimate-Play-The-Game and Software Projects became renowned for producing software which made the best possible use of the limited graphics and sound potential of those basic machines, but not at the expense of the immediate and lasting appeal of the games.

Now Software Projects have answered the prayers of 16-bit owners, who are fed up with paying through the nose for games which are visually and aurally stunning, but either unplayable or so insubstantial that they become nothing more than vaguely interactive graphics and sound demos; but now, the classic game, *Manic Miner*, rides again.

Manic Miner was the professional debut of programmer Matthew Smith. It is a two dimensional platform game with twenty stages, which must be completed successively. Looking at it today, it doesn't seem to be anything to ring home about, but, when you begin to play, it does not take long to discover the addictive qualities that made the game such a huge success when it was first released.

You control Miner Willy, a spritely little chap who is trying to find his way out of an abandoned mine, which is now populated by various malign creatures including the likes of snapping toilets and mutant telephones. You achieve the escape by jumping from platform to platform, dodging the nasties and collecting all of the keys on the screen. Once you have obtained them all, it just remains to head for the exit before your air runs out.

With this new release, Software Projects are bound to please a lot of *Manic Miner* fans – not only have they included an updated version of the game which makes full use of the advanced features of 16-bit machines, but there is also an exact replica of the original which is so accurate that you can use the same pixel perfect timing you developed when playing the game on your humble speccy.

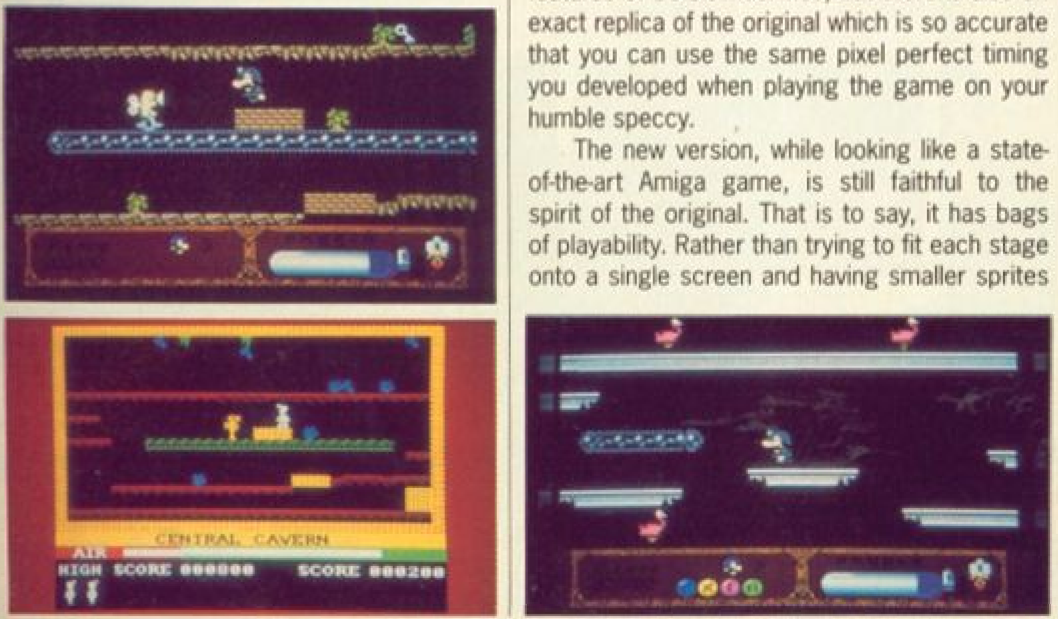
The new version, while looking like a state-of-the-art Amiga game, is still faithful to the spirit of the original. That is to say, it has bags of playability. Rather than trying to fit each stage onto a single screen and having smaller sprites as a result, the author has gone for large, well animated sprites, so you only ever see a small section of each stage, the rest being scrolled smoothly on as and when you come to it.

Gone is the familiar atonal rendition of *Peer Gynt* – it has been replaced by one of those ditties which you find yourself humming in the bath three days afterwards. Spot effects have also been souped up and there is some digitised speech thrown in there for good measure.

It is nice to note that Software Projects have taken the plunge and given 16-bit gamers what they have asked for: advanced graphics and sound with a bit of good old fashioned 8-bit playability. Other companies take note – this is the way 16-bit games should be!

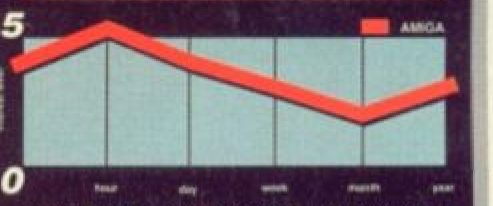
● **Laurence Scotford**

•Look out for a conversion of *Jet Set Willy* coming soon.



These shots show The Central Cavern and The Menagerie in both new and old versions

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



If you haven't played before, it will take you a short while to accustomise yourself to the split second timing required on many of the screens. Once you have done that, you will love this game. There comes a point when frustration level is reached and you just can't get past a particular screen. It is best then to play something else for a while before going back to this game and trying again.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£9.99dk	TBA
AMIGA	£9.99dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned.		

AMIGA

The copy of the original is exact in every detail except the sound, which is slightly wonky in places. The updated version is superb – the sprites are large and well animated and, although you only see a small portion of the playing area at one time, it scrolls very smoothly. Nice ditties too.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6	ACE RATING
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	9	870

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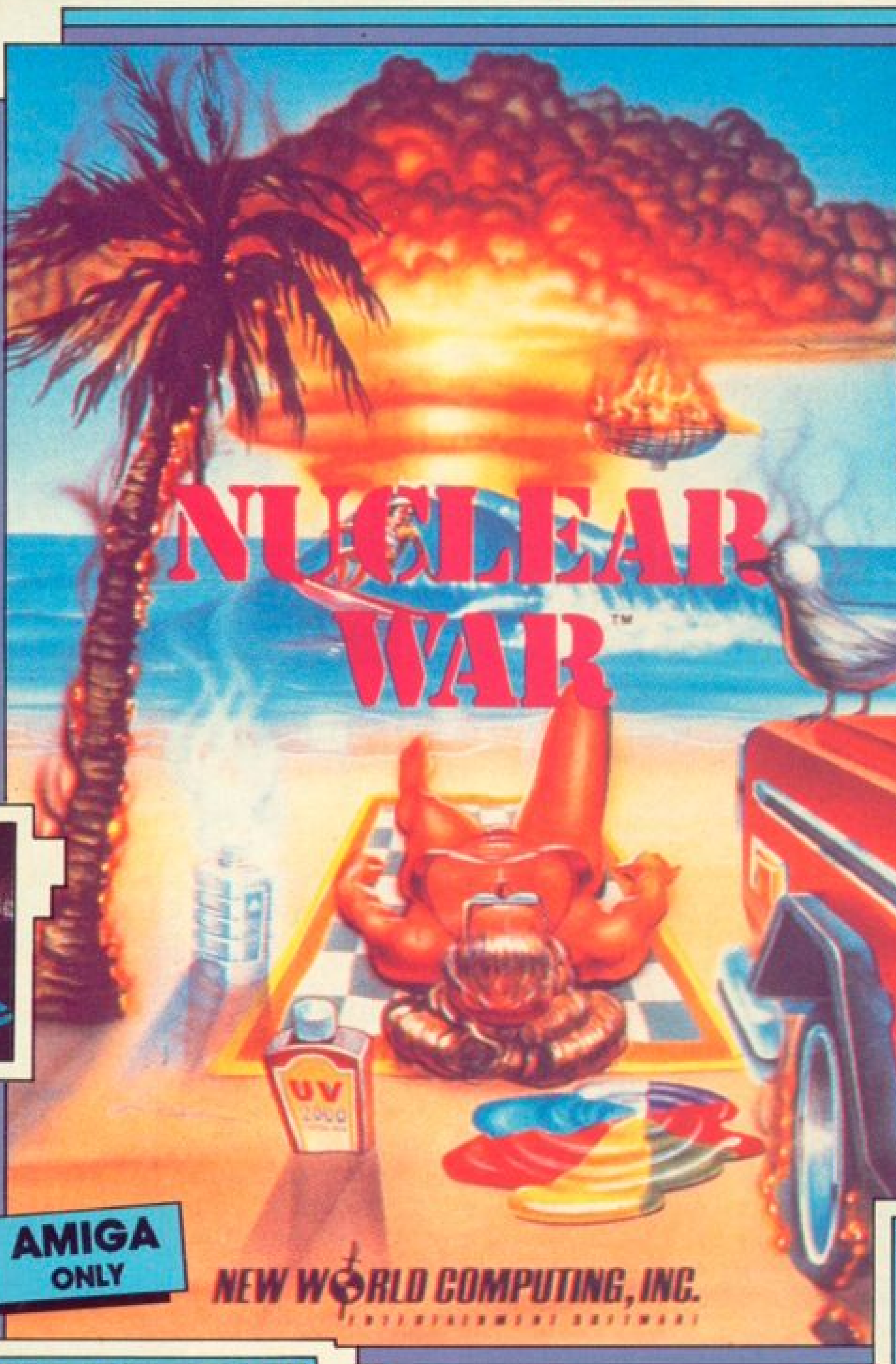
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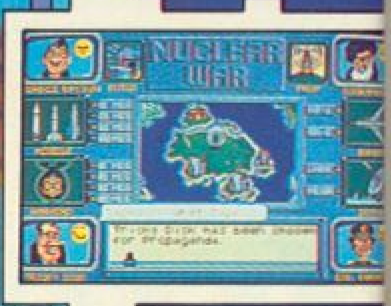
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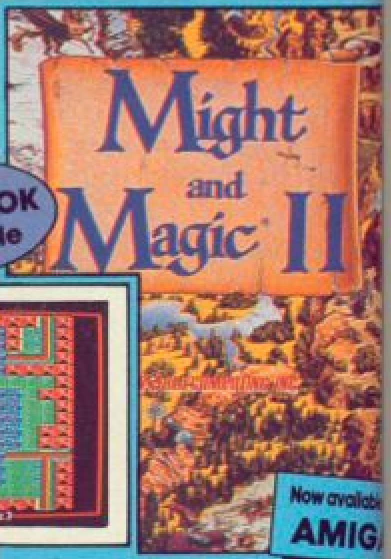
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AMIGA

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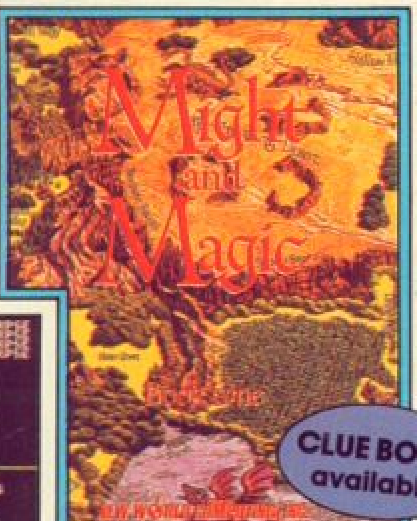
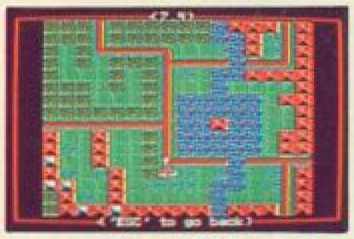
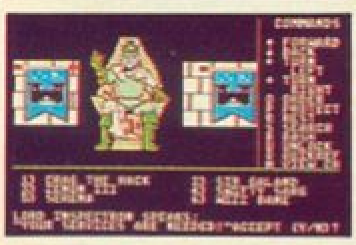

Might and Magic

CLUE BOOK available

Options: A-Attack B-Bribe H-Hide R-Run


('ESC' to go back)



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Screen shots from various formats.

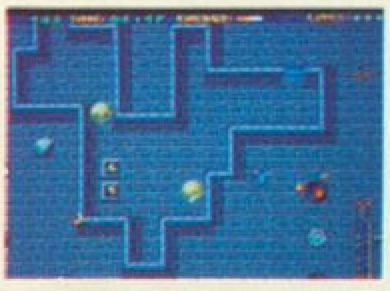
LEAVIN' TERAMIS

GRANDSLAM/THALION go in for a bit of quick-fire mutie bashing on the longest spaceship in the universe

LET me tell you, Teramis is a pretty huge ship. The intro sequence will show you just how long. Trouble is, you've got to shoot your way from one end of it to the other. You see, just last night there was one hell of a party in the Xenobiological lab to celebrate the collection of some weird mutating aliens. Having drunk quite a lot you decided to bunk down in the hyperdrive section at the far end of the ship and sleep it off.

When you wake up you discover to your horror that the alien life forms have escaped and overrun the ship. Your fellow astronauts have all disappeared leaving you behind. Fortunately there is one escape shuttle left at the front of the ship. But the ship's self destruct sequence has been activated so you will have to deactivate each section's generator to give you enough time to reach the shuttle.

What you basically have here is a good old-fashioned scrolling shoot 'em up which is very fast and frantic. The ship is divided into sections in which you must fight your way through various aliens, collecting useful add-ons and bonuses until you reach the end-of-level nasty who must be destroyed before you go onto the next level.



Fast colourful Shoot 'em Up action aboard the Teramis

The most important factor in the game is time which is constantly ticking away and must be continually refreshed. The way to do this is by leaving the main body of the ship and moving along one of the external arms to deactivate the generator at the end. In the early part of the game these arms are unguarded, but on later stages there are nasty creatures to dispatch before you can get to the generator.

Leavin' Teramis doesn't attempt to be original in any way. What it does do very well is provide shoot 'em up addicts with a very humorous, colourful, and fast way to while away a good few hours. Recommended to people who like shooting everything that moves.

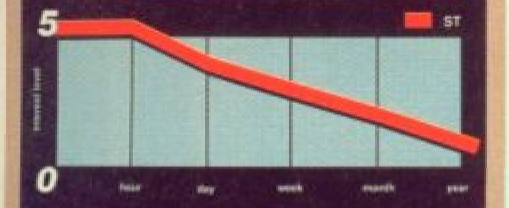
● **Laurence Scotford**

ATARI ST

Colourful, fast, nice sound, with intro pics that have Amiga colour resolution. It also runs at single-frame speed – that's fifty screen updates per second rather than twenty-five (which is a lot more common). This means you get nice smooth scrolling (not that usual on an ST).

				ACE RATING
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4	810
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A visually appealing game, it positively invites you to play, and that is exactly what you will do over and over for some time. Inevitably for a product of this type you will soon get sick of it. Then it will be time to move onto the next release for shoot 'em up addicts.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

SUPER CARS

GREMLIN'S entertaining race game has us all in a spin

SET in a pseudo- fantasy world *Super Cars* has you racing against computer controlled cars for Championship supremacy.

The actual game starts you off with a very impressive picture of three beefy cars. A box indicates which stage, or class you are on and which of the tracks you have raced on.

Click on any of the three cars and you are presented with a very well drawn side view of the car and loads of facts and figures. If you have enough dosh you can buy one or trade-in your old car.

You can pop into the garage where you will be greeted by a smiling young girl. The garage can be visited at anytime, before or after a race and is essential for staying in the game. This is where you make the repairs to your car and can soup it up with goodies including Power Steering, Spin Assist and a Front missile.

After viewing all of these fantastic graphical scenes you would expect the actual racing section to be something really impressive, but in fact it's quite disappointing. It's an over head view with trees and other objects, which scrolls jerkily as you bomb along. The sprites also are quite small.

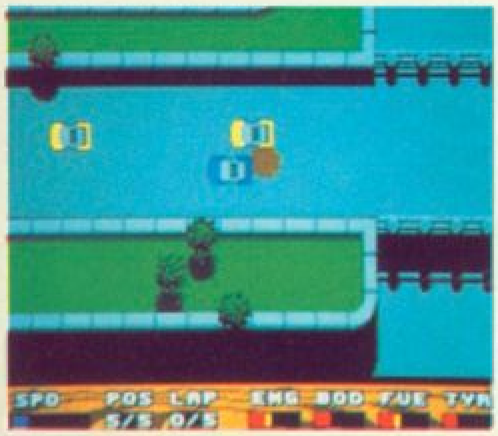
Racing round is great fun. It's a shame that a two player game is not available. On shooting the yellow enemy cars they become permanently incapacitated and can slow down your car and those of other competitors.

Nine Tracks have to be driven before you can proceed to the second stage of the three, these can be done in any order. The Driver must come first second or third in EVERY race or he will be disqualified.

Racing round and ploughing into walls, quite naturally, damage the cars and this is shown on four graphs: Bodywork, Engine, Tyres and Fuel. The damage can be repaired in the garage, but if any graph hits zero it's game over time.

As you progress so do the opposition, they get more experienced, faster and even buy better models of car!

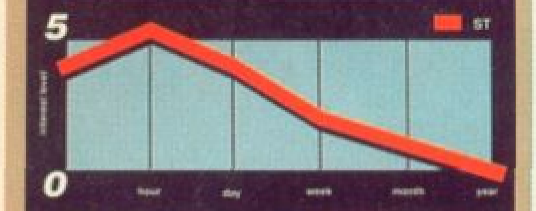
This Supersprint style racing game is great fun and really addictive – it is a shame though that you cannot race against friends.



Hmmm... that overhead view looks familiar. There's fast fun to be had on these tracks though.

● **Chris Morley**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The attractive presentation is instantly appealing, and the gameplay is quite fun for a while, but there is not really enough here to hold your interest for long. A two-player option might have helped.

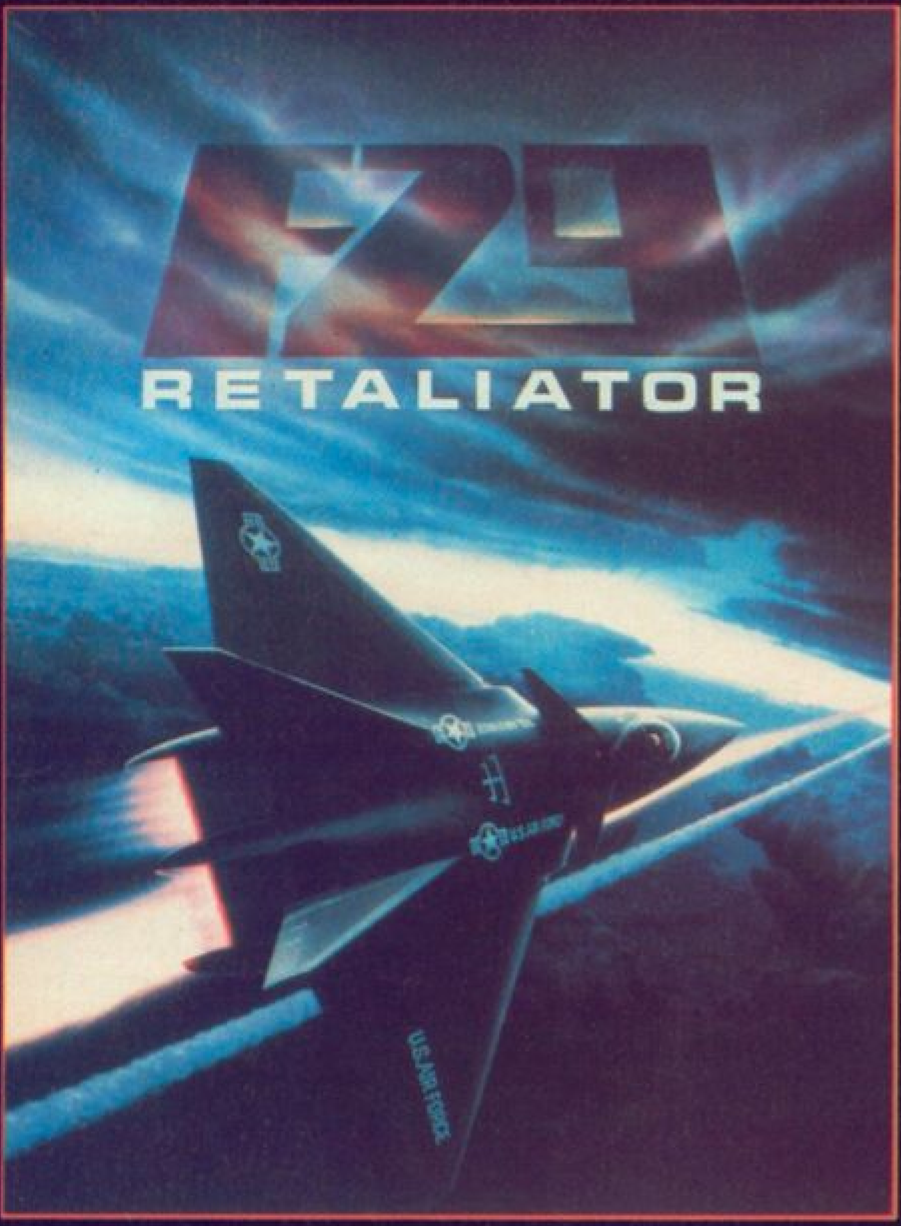
RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
NINTENDO	£TBA	SUMMER '90

ATARI ST

The car selection and garage screens look fairly pretty, but the overhead view with small sprites is nothing new. There are a couple of pleasant tunes to add to the action, but on the whole this product does not really break any new ground.

				ACE RATING
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6	790
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8	



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h no! now I wish I'd stayed with the bees! They're just buzzing babes compared to these tanks, planes and opters on COMBAT ISLAND. Yes, it's time to beat these guys at their own game and take to the air . . . now here's my Box of Wings?

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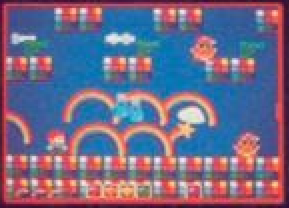

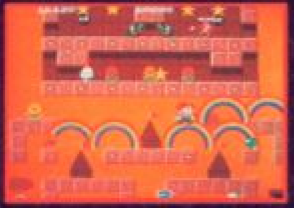

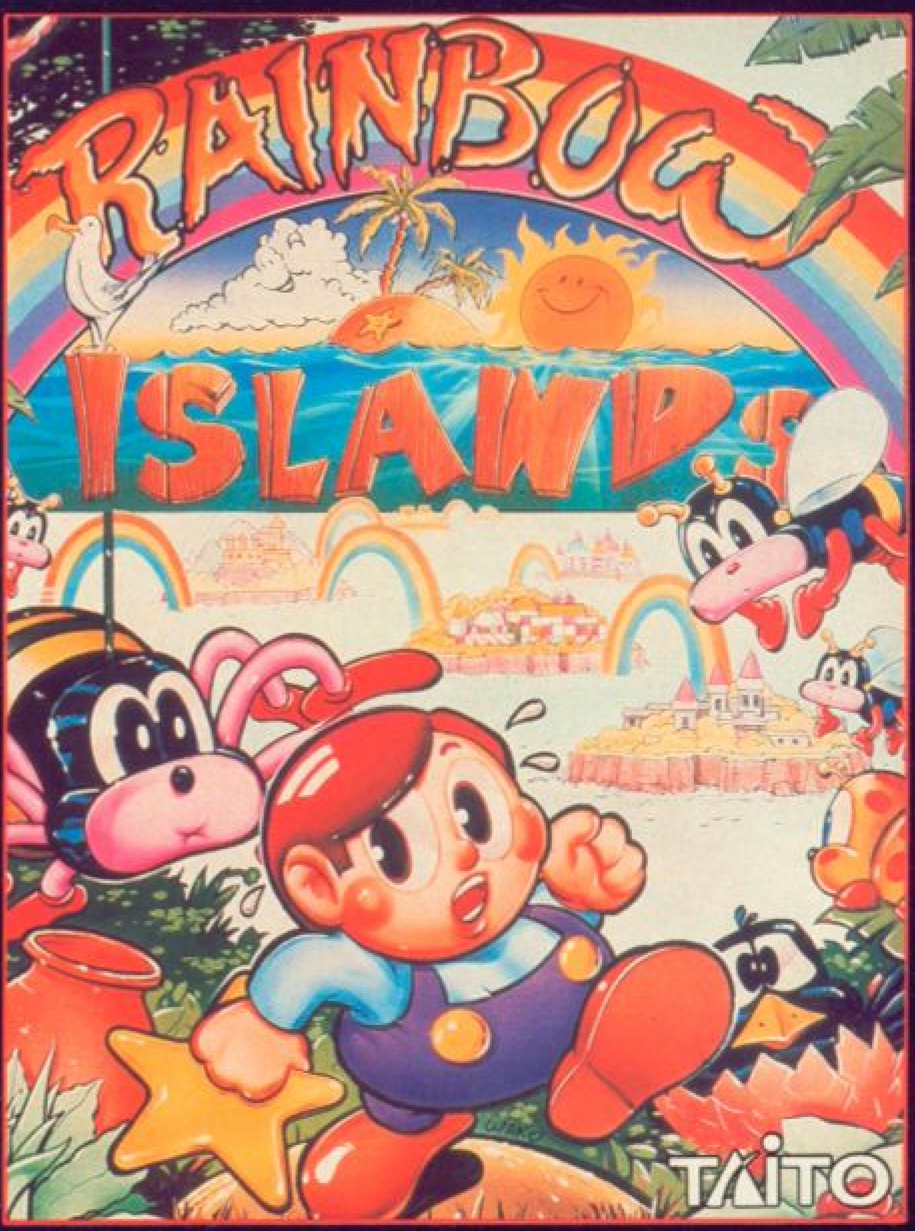

16it Machine **THE**

SY FEAR

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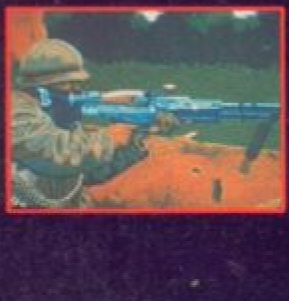
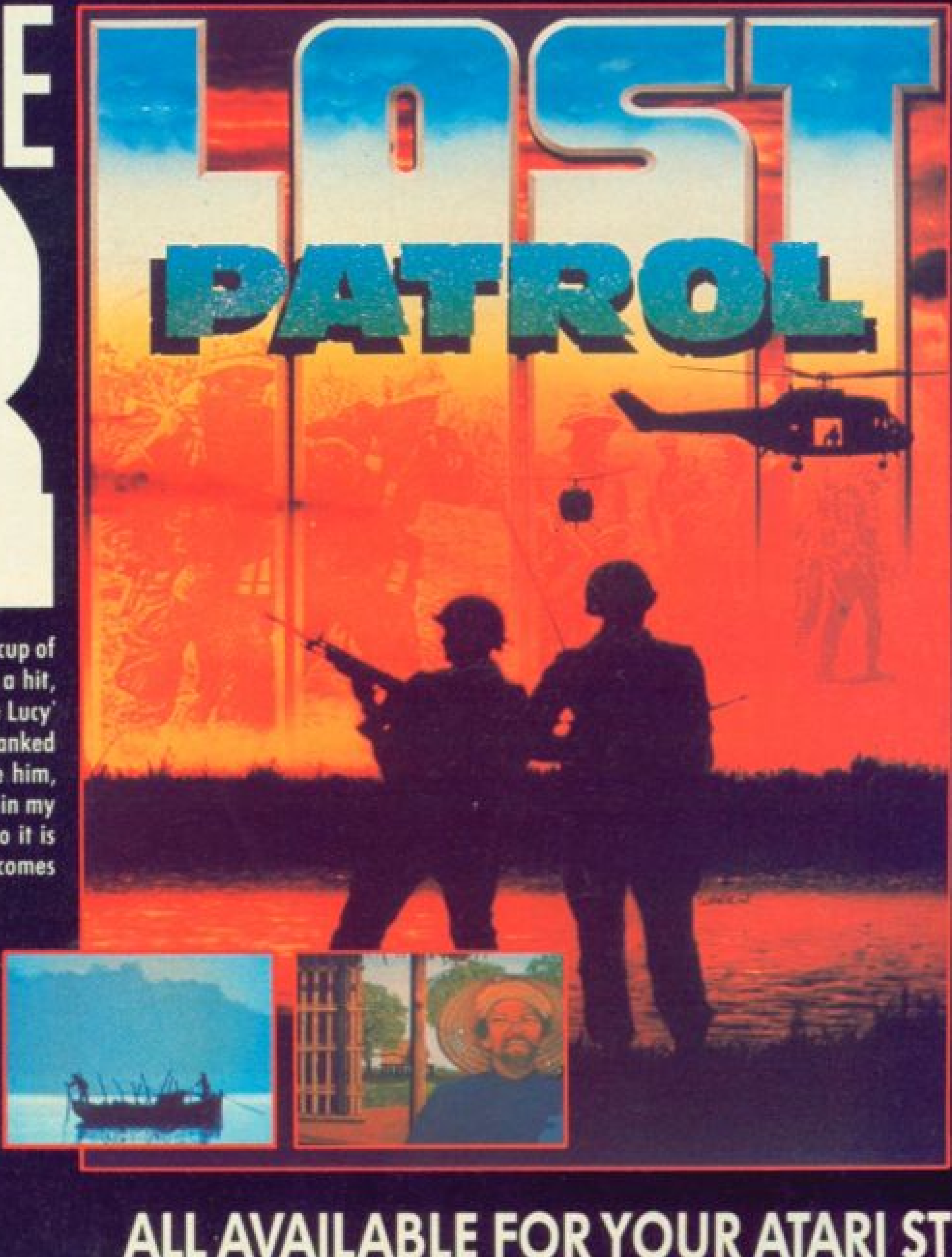
We were glad to be going home . . . seven weary survivors looking forward to a real cup of coffee and a piece of mom's apple pie. But then it happened . . . our chopper took a hit, tailed-out and our pilot managed a crash landing — but he won't be seeing 'I Love Lucy' again. Now we're foot-slogging a wide, flat trail but its slow, dangerous curves are flanked by impenetrable bush. I know Charlie knows we're here — maybe we can surprise him, maybe not . . . that's just *one* thing that helps our insomnia . . . that and the psycho in my squad — I gotta figure out who it is before the morale factor becomes our worst enemy.





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ALL AVAILABLE FOR YOUR ATARI ST

MIDWINTER

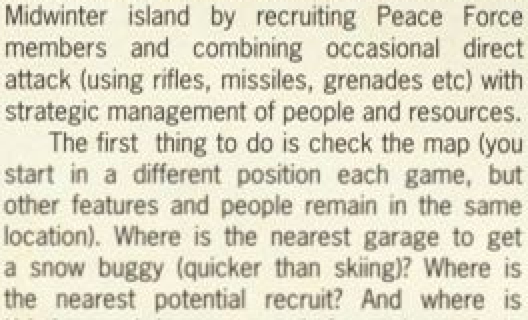
MICROPROSE's Mike Singleton megagame hits the streets at last...

AT last we've got our hands on a full production copy of *Midwinter* (extensively previewed in earlier issues of ACE). You may have read reviews of it elsewhere in recent months, but these were taken from a pre-production version that was demonstrated to magazines. This is the first *gameplay* review your likely to see... much more important, in our view.

The game comes with bags of support material: a very lengthy manual (with a few misprints), a short 'quickstart' instruction sheet, a map, and a pad of mini-maps that you can use for planning campaigns. Much as I like quickstart instructions, this is definitely one game you cannot play effectively without reading at least half the manual.

What's good about it, however, is that you can *start* playing straightaway. Your objective is prevent Masters' invasion force overrunning the Midwinter island by recruiting Peace Force members and combining occasional direct attack (using rifles, missiles, grenades etc) with strategic management of people and resources.

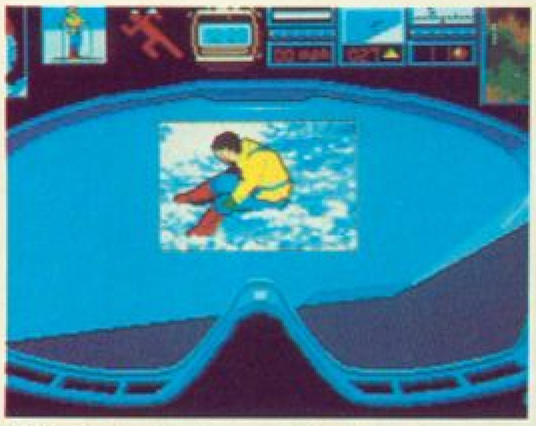
The first thing to do is check the map (you start in a different position each game, but other features and people remain in the same location). Where is the nearest garage to get a snow buggy (quicker than skiing)? Where is the nearest potential recruit? And where is Kristiansen (who can recruit four other people immediately by radio, if he can find one)? Lazy players will quit and restart until they find themselves in an initial location either right by a garage or close to one, preferably centrally located.



Using the map is a frequent necessity while planning your campaign. Moving your arrow over a feature brings up information in the panel in the right. We've just started and have located our first potential recruit.

From then on, it's a matter of moving your characters around as efficiently as possible (they get tired and injured very easily), balancing the need to destroy resources (denying them to the enemy) with your own need to use them. Gameplay is made much easier through the fact that captured characters can easily be freed (by blowing up their prison) and injured ones are automatically 'rescued' and dumped in the nearest village.

Combine these advantages with the fact that, when you start, the enemy has already overrun much of the South-East, and you have a situation that forces you to act with all possible speed. Unlike some complex games, this made easier by the fact that although you need a lot of background info from the manual to play effectively, the actual commands are very simple to learn. You can use mouse, joystick, or keyboard – the manual recommends a mouse but I found the joystick easier for skiing and buggying.



Skiing is deceptively easy at the beginning because Stark is very good at it. Other characters are more likely to take a tumble, wasting valuable time in the process.

Mike Singleton's previous mega-hit, *Lords of Midnight*, succeeded because of its playability – none of the other *Midnight* games came anywhere close. It's a great relief to report that *Midwinter* is undoubtedly as playable as *LOM* and a good deal more challenging. The only drawback is that the landscape isn't quite detailed enough (OK, it's all covered in snow) but you spend much more time thinking and planning than you did in the previous game. It's also a pity that the map screen requires disk access, since you need it frequently. These niggles apart, this is a sure-fire success. Stand by for a full player's guide in next month's ACE.

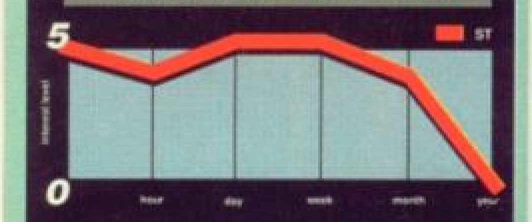
● **Steve Cooke**

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
PC	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The initial feel of the game is very favourable – well packaged, and interesting documentation.

There's a long learning curve – at least a day for the committed player – but the joy of *Midwinter* is that you can get started straightaway and make meaningful progress immediately. Unlike some complex games, there's no period of early discouragement when everything seems just too difficult.

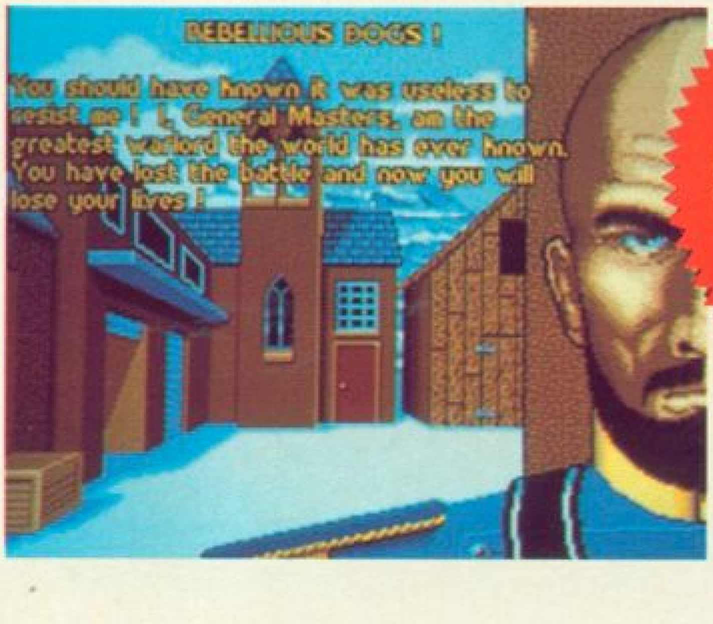
There are three ways of playing (that determine how the enemy attacks you, if at all) which effectively provide various levels of difficulty. The only trouble here is that if you win on the easiest level you are not so likely to want to win again on a higher level since the actual strategic process remains the same (it's simply more difficult to achieve). However this does extend the long-term interest slightly. But then perhaps this is academic: you're certainly not going to finish this one in a hurry, and you WILL want to finish it – you can be sure of that!

ATARI ST

Two disks, but almost no disk-swapping at all. Yay! Sound is wee bit disappointing – all you get are mechanical drones of various sorts and a lot of snow swishing about. This is one game that would have benefitted from some moody music...The graphics are probably familiar by now from numerous screenshots – attractive and functional but not enormously gaspworthy.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	9
AUDIO	4	**FUN FACTOR**	7

ACE RATING **948**



REBELLIOUS DOGS !

You should have known it was useless to resist me ! I, General Masters, am the greatest warlord the world has ever known. You have lost the battle and now you will lose your lives !

ACE RATED 948

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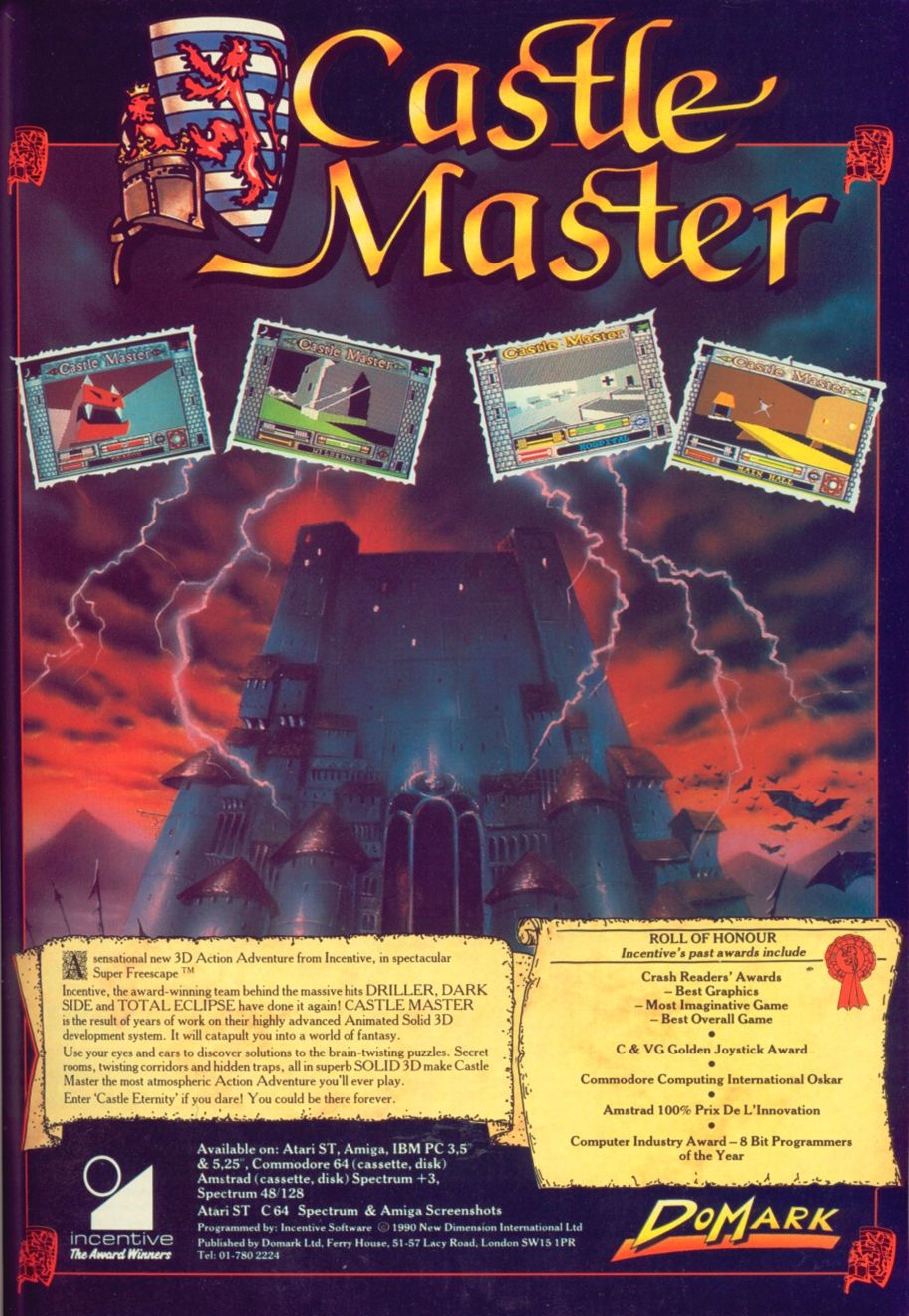

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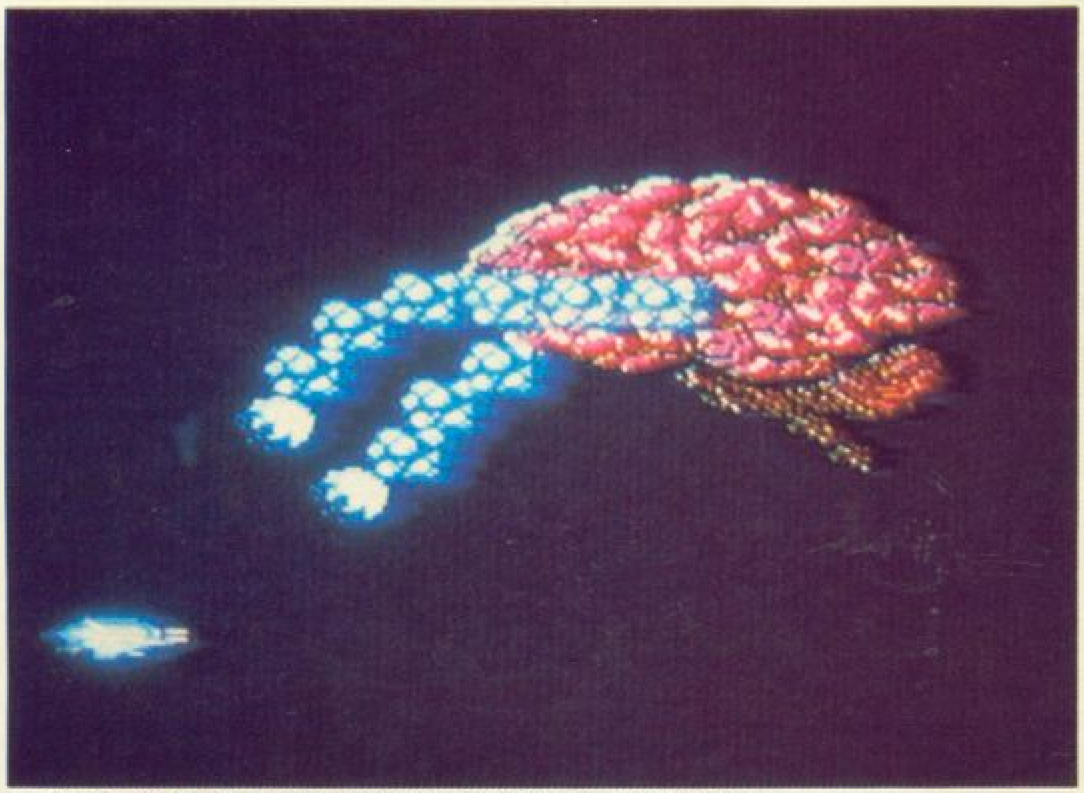
The Award Winners

DOMARK

CONSOLE CRAZY

ACE looks at some of the latest releases for the Nintendo Entertainment System



Golem's Death Hands grab at you as you try to shoot out the aliens eye.

LIFE FORCE - SALAMANDER

Life Force is better known to UK gamers as *Salamander* - a cult scrolling shoot 'em up that set the arcades alight with its eye catching flaming planet terrain.

The effect was widely copied in stacks of games but due to contractual wrangles the official conversions were limited to a couple of systems only and were of indifferent quality. For this reason the old classic is doubly welcome on the NES. Nintendo owners will spot a similarity with *Gradius – Salamander's* prequel. The opening flurry of laser action is practically identical to the first few screens of *Gradius*.

But once you have tooled up with a couple of lasers or a Ripple Cannon – depending on your taste , there the similarity ends and you are in for six completely new levels of shoot 'em up.

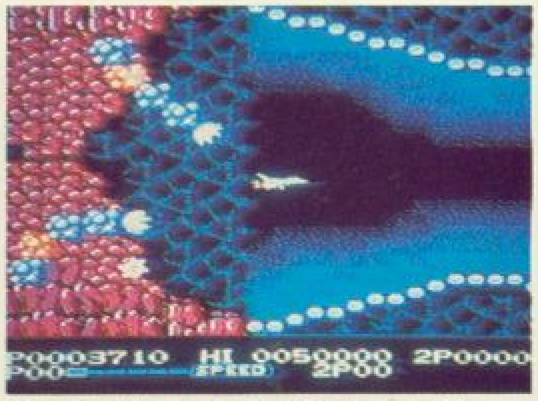
NINTENDO	£29.99ct		OUT NOW	
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING 740
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8	

Life Force introduces a particularly nasty planet eating alien called Zelos who is about to snack on your planet unless you do something about it. Confronting Zelos first requires the successful negotiation of six levels of action – three horizontal and three vertical.

The powers ups are well up to the job in hand which often involves blasting a flight path through walls as well as downing nasties. The method of tooling up is the same as in *Gradius*. Shoot down a whole squadron of nasties and then pick up the glowing jewel. This will illuminate a weapon selection in your control panel. Take this one or wait until you get another jewel which will light up another weapon window in the control panel. Aficionados won't settle for anything less than Twin Plutonic Lasers. Its Blackpool without the lights unless you have them.

Cell Stage 1 takes you through the Phenom Galaxy where grasping Death Hand's – like giant worms wriggling out of the walls try to grab you. The action turns on its head for Terror Zone II where volcanoes and UG Space Ships are your main concerns. Just when you are getting used to life in a vertical world the game flips back on its side for Terror Zone III. If you get this far you will encounter the legendary flaming fire creatures – and most arcade like they are too. The final three stages continue the quick change routine between horizontal and vertical action at the end of level.

But don't get the impression that *Salamander* is a mere sightseeing tour of six pretty levels. There is a mean end of level nasty at the end of each level who is determined to stop you sampling the delights of the next level. Particularly tough are the the Tutankhamanattack and the Intruder. The battle is finally won when you destroy Zelos' heart and soul at the end of the sixth level.



Erupting volcanoes in the Baltic Galaxy. The walls of this level are also doted with laser bases.

Konami's *Life Force* pushes the NES to the limits. In sound, graphics and animation the latest cartridges are more powerful than ever – adding weight to Nintendo's argument that there is a lot more to be had out of the NES by upgrading the cartridges rather than the hardware they run on. It is certainly tough enough and pretty enough to keep the most discerning of shoot 'em fans busy for a considerable amount of time.

Graphically superb – *Life Force* now takes up the mantle of best Nintendo shoot 'em up. If you enjoyed *Gradius* you'll love *Life Force*. I did.

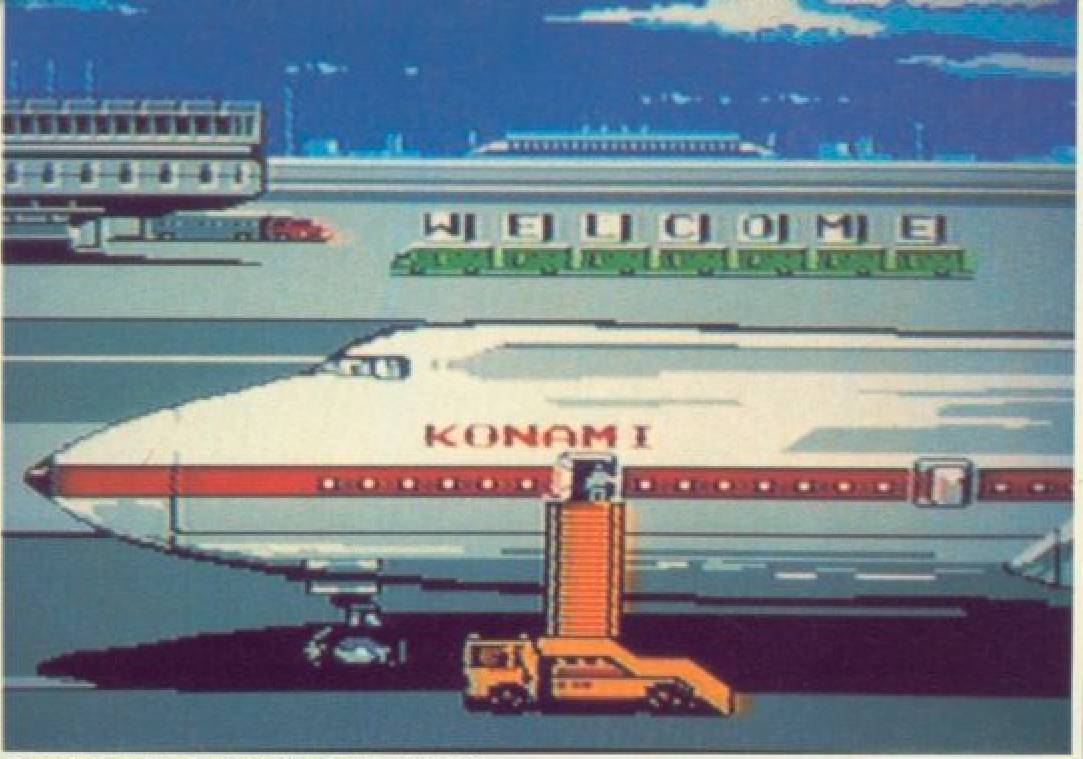
● **Eugene Lacey.**

DOUBLE DRIBBLE

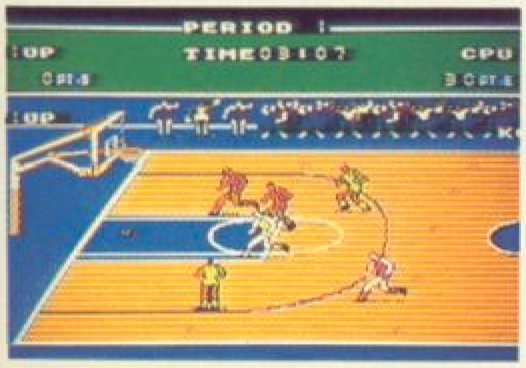
NINTENDO	£29.99ct		OUT NOW	
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	7	ACE RATING 719
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7	

Konami's *Double Dribble* sets new standards for basketball on the Nintendo with some delightful graphical touches and good, solid game play for two players – or just one against the computer.

The game is a conversion of the popular Konami coin-op Basketmaster and has an exciting American 'big league' feel to it. Jubilant fans cheer the goals, cheer leaders wave their pom



Konami Airways - Nintendo's Favourite Airlines.



New York take a pounding by Nintendo's own squad.

poms about, and an official hooter blasts out at the end of time periods.

Like most sports sims basketball games stand or fall on how easily the player can control the movement of the ball from player to player. *Double Dribble* has a well honed system to deliver smoothness of ball control. Using a combination of 'A' and 'B' buttons on the control pad the player can jump, steal, pass the ball to flashing players, and shoot.

The Slam Screen is completely unique to *Double Dribble*, When your offensive player attacks the basket for a uncontested lay in the computer switches in automatic to show the score in large animated sprites. You see basket being slam dunked in one of three dramatic moves.

The computer keeps track of the the scores and the time. Violations of various kinds are also overseen by the computerised referee.

The matches are fought out between four of America's main basketballing tows – New York, Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles. and you can choose which one you want to represent. All the selections are registered in the NES by lobbing a ball into the appropriate basket – again handled superbly by the computer.

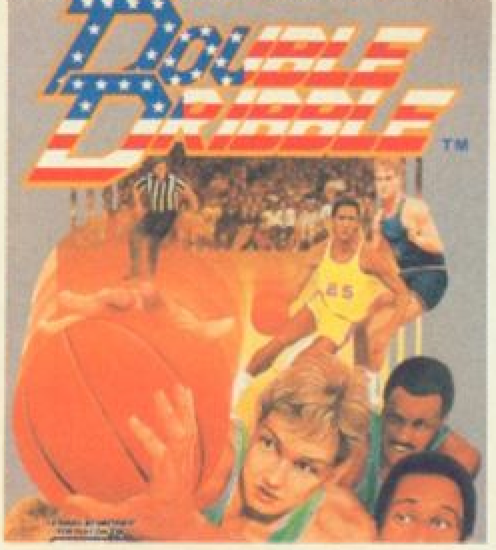
Like all sports sims the game is at its best as a two player challenge – but the solo game against the computer is also good fun – the NES doing a good impression of a team made up of five Larry Bird clones.

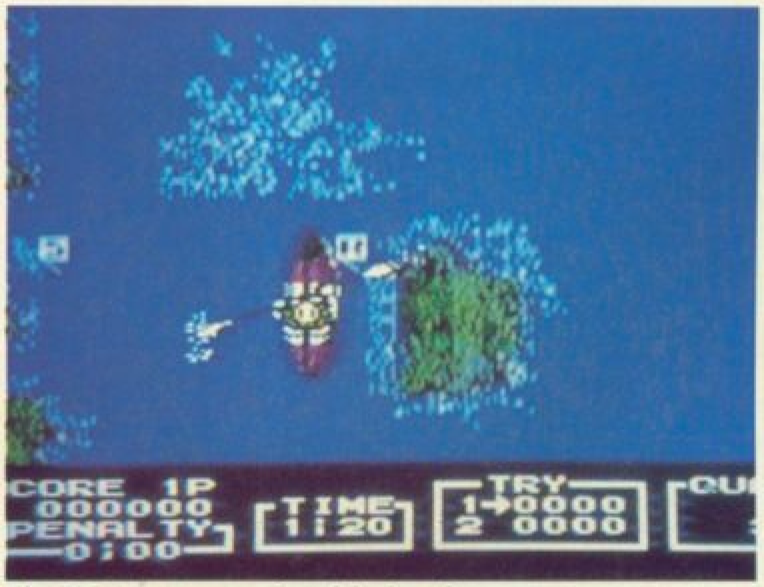
Once you master the controls *Double Dribble* provides lasting entertainment value. You never tire of a good sports sim and *Double Dribble* is a most welcome addition to the limited range of Nintendo sports sims.

Double Dribble pushes the NES to the limits in two important categories. The giant sprites in the automatic 'slam dunk' screens are most impressive. They are like watching a series of photographic stills. The game also includes an impressive – if limited – amount of speech synthesis. It is unusual to come across speech in a game – even on computers much more powerful than the NES. All the more credit is due to Konami for this. It adds to the enjoyment.

Both offensive and Defensive plays have an authentic feel. *Double Dribble* makes for an exciting end to end challenge with lots of baskets. A quality sports simulation.

● **Eugene Lacey**





The 'R' Gate means pass through backwards.

TRACK & FIELD II

NINTENDO	£29.99ct	OUT NOW	
GRAPHICS 8	IQ FACTOR 7	ACE RATING	813
AUDIO 6	FUN FACTOR 8		

You better be fit for *Track and Field II* as Konami have squeezed fifteen different game challenges onto this crowded cartridge.

Take a deep breath and prepare for – Taekwondo (Martial Art), Pole Vaulting, Canoeing, Skeet Shooting, Hammer Throwing, High Diving, Archery, Hurdles, Gymnastics, Hang Gliding, Pistol Firing, Arm Wrestling, Fencing, Triple Jumping, and Swimming.

Competitors come from all over the world to compete in the Konami Olympics and the prizes for success. Choose a nation to represent and then start the fun.

The original *Track and Field II* was a coin-op hit in the Summer of '85. It was particularly popular in pubs and clubs and generated a great deal of noise as the favoured technique was to hammer on the buttons with your fists to propel your athlete along.

Many of the events in this Nintendo version require lots of button pushing as well but it is not just a question of tapping the buttons as quickly as you can. There is plenty of skill needed as well.

All of the events have a qualifying round. If you succeed in one of these you are given a password which enables you to enter the main event every time you play after this.

Most of the events employ a beat 'em style control method – whereby you manipulate your athlete using a variety of 'A' and 'B' buttons and joypad positions. In the fencing for example you press 'A' and push up on the joypad for a high thrust, or in the High Diving event you press 'B' down on the joypad for a swan dive. Each event requires a good deal of skill and judgment as well as practice if you are to score maximum points.

All of the events reach a high standard and preferences will vary. Probably the best of them are Taikwondo, Fencing, and Canoeing. The 'Versus' mode enables you to play some of these two player sports as a one off – without taking part in the Championships and without the necessity of having to qualify in the practice mode.

All of the traditional frills of the opening ceremony and prize presentations are featured in *Track & Field II*. You are even shown the athletes arriving at the airport.

Track & Field II's fifteen events will keep you busy for ages. It takes a good deal of skill and practice to take top honours in most events ensuring a regular 'plug in' for this cartridge.

Fifteen events on one cartridge takes a bit of doing – particularly as no corners have been cut on any of the games either graphically or sonically.

Living proof that you can get just as much game onto a cartridge as you can onto a couple of three and half inch disks.

Track & Field II features a game type to suit everyone. A must for sports sim fans.

● **Eugene Lacey**

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OPERATION WOLF – "Not only has all the action and game play been captured, but so has the excitement, making it one of the most satisfying and compulsive shoot-em-ups to have appeared in a long time" ACE

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BATMAN – "The characters and backgrounds are striking – each are superlative – features a soundtrack in glorious remixed stereo" The One

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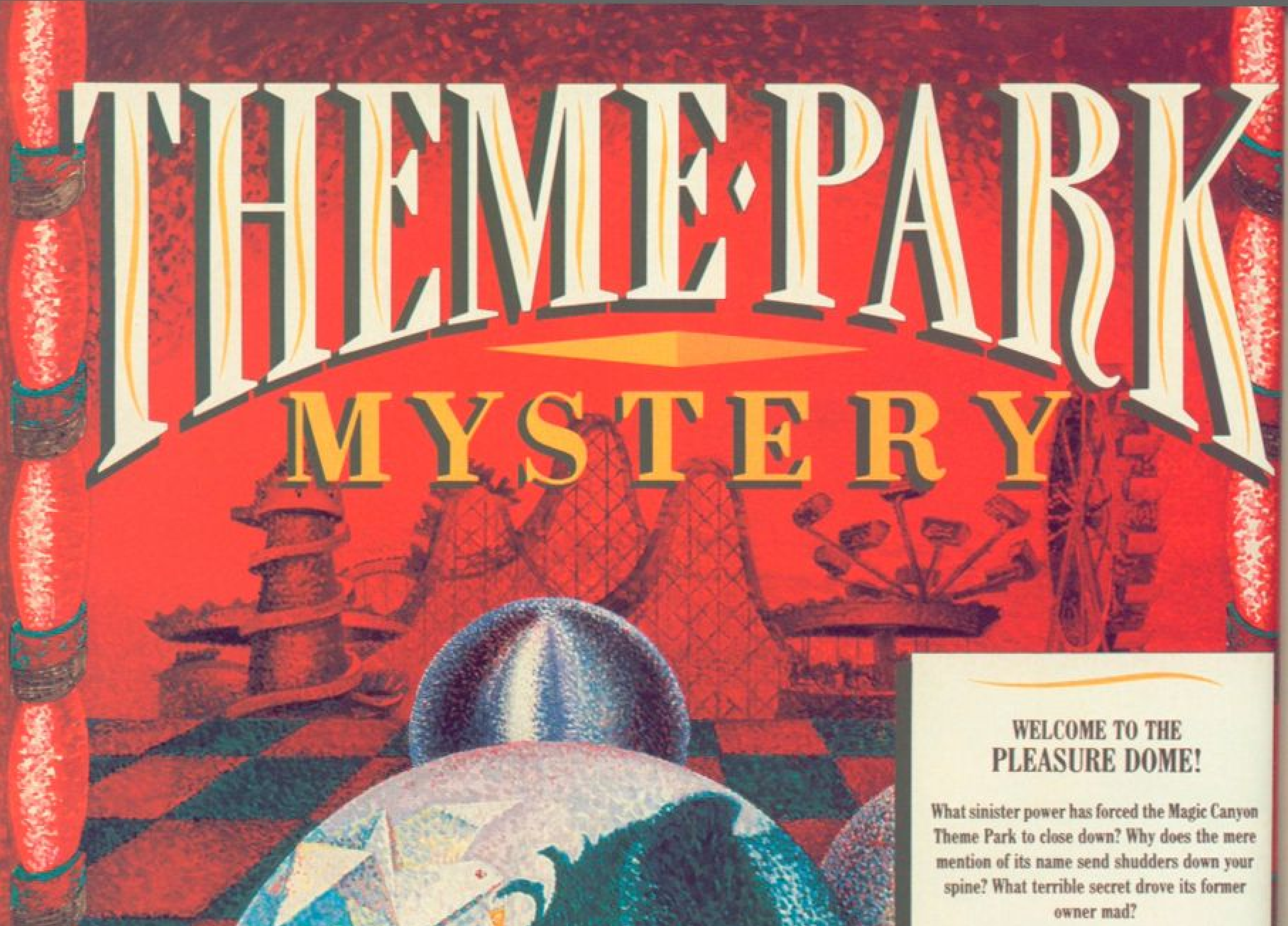
C-2186

THEME PARK MYSTERY



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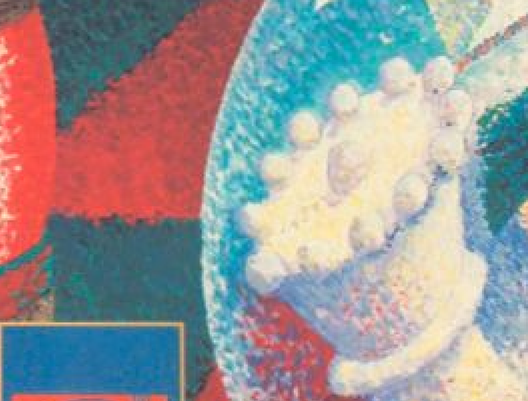

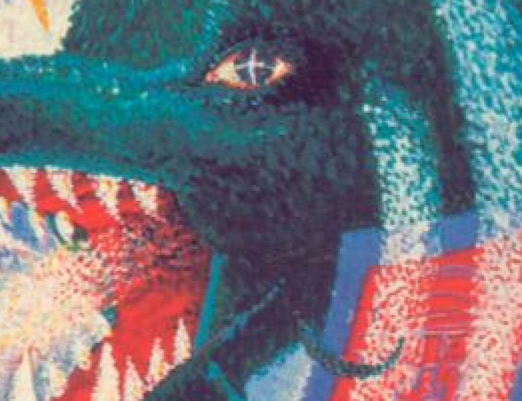

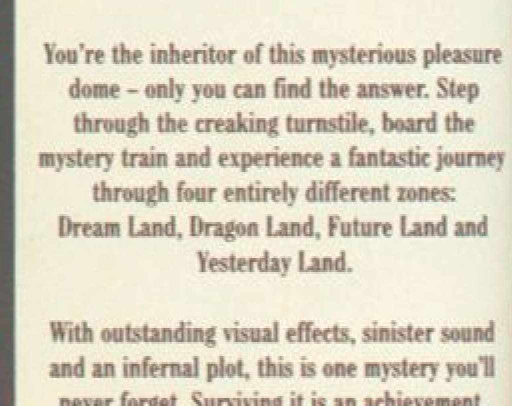

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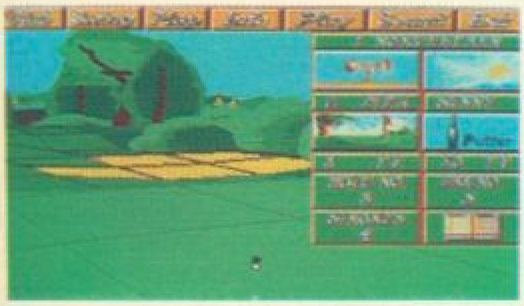
ULTIMATE GOLF

A quick preview of GREMLIN'S bid to resurrect the ancient art of micro golf...

GOLF hasn't been top of the bill in recent years, when racing and flight sims seem to have taken the honours. Time was, however, when golf games were one of the most popular genres around. Gremlin's *Ultimate Golf* hopes to put the clubs back on the green for keeps with a state-of-the-art interpretation of the sport.



You're on the green and checking the course status before putting. When you actually make the shot, the player appears and takes his swing.

The preproduction version we've seen is certainly impressive. Grid-based 3D perspective terrain combines with highly detailed playing options that will leave anyone used to the old Speccy and BBC golf games speechless. First, you can play against a computer opponent (a big improvement). Second, you can vary body, hand, and club position to achieve precise ball control through hooks, slices, and spins. Finally, you can view the pitch in detail by using a zoom-in, zoom-out map display as well as the standard 3D playing screen.

Once you've set up your shot, you get a neat bit of animation as your player figure takes a swing at the ball. The graphics on the Amiga version (the only one we've seen) are clear and easy to interpret so that you can make meaningful decisions about how and where to place the ball (skill allowing, of course).

Finally, programmer Paul Blyth (who previously gave us *FOFT* on ST and Amiga) is planning to release different course disks for use with the game – you get two with the basic program. Looks like computer golf could be on the verge of a comeback...

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£19.99dk £14.99cs	IMMINENT
No other versions planned.		

DYTER 7

RELINE's new shoot-em-up has echoes of *Defender* and *Choplifter*. But is that enough?

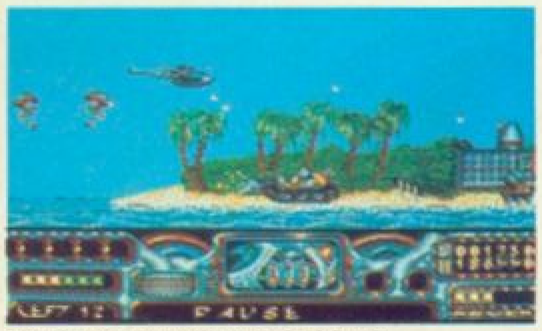
DYTER 7 takes its inspiration from two of the classic shoot 'em ups – *Choplifter* and *Defender*. From Choplifter come the tiny figures that have to be plucked from danger by your chopper, and from Defender comes the sophisticated radar which shows the position of the enemy attack vehicles that have to be destroyed before progressing to the next level.

These dual elements of strategy do something to elevate *Dyter 7* above the plethora of scroll and shoot, grab the power up, smack the end-of-level nasty games that seem to be about the extent of most publishers' imagination these days. On the other hand, adapting two seven-year-old game ideas is hardly the stuff of design awards – but at least the games were well chosen and the whole package is put together with playability uppermost in the programmers' minds.

Earth is under attack again – but this time the battle is fought here rather than in deep space. The invaders are taking over the planet country by country and island by island. From your fortress below the sea you launch the counter attack. *Dyter 7* is an attack chopper that can be made pretty deadly by bolting on the lethal assortment of power ups that are earned by rescuing the scientists.

There are eight levels of play – four above ground and four below. You first engage the enemy on a series of tropical islands, dealing with land attack vehicles, frigates, subs and gun boats lying offshore. Once all opposition has been eliminated you can progress to the next level. You have to be quick about it as well because the enemy submarine will deposit a fresh supply of droids if you don't manage it in time.

Entering the next level involves 'Flying down to the beast' – through a volcano. The vertically scrolling shoot 'em up that follows is quite novel – even if it is a bit too easy by comparison with the level that precedes it. It must be a first, flying down-screen , rather than up. Power ups are essential here – you need at least a multi-directional laser to survive the beast.



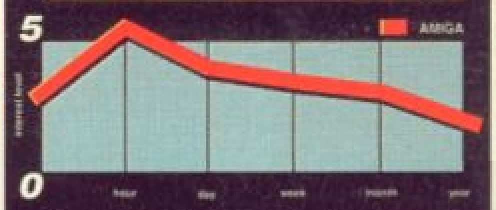
Blasting your way in over the islands.

Best of all are the tiny scientists that you can pick up and ferry back to the safety of your base. When you land they run out of the chopper like little insects. You have to rescue them as well. If you ignore them and just start blasting it out with the enemy you won't be able to get your hands on those vital power ups.

It's refreshing to come across a shoot 'em up where there is a bit more to think about than the next power up. *Dyter 7* has action a-plenty but also forces you to think about the fight rather than moronically pumping away on your fire button. Let's hope it starts a trend.

● **Eugene Lacey**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A tough shoot 'em up that will tax the most dexterous of joystick jocks. Its system of calculating bonuses adds to the lasting interest: once you have sailed through all the levels you can start playing off time versus the number of scientists rescued for higher scores. Challenging and entertaining enough to keep you coming back for more.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned.		

AMIGA

One of the best title screens on the Amiga so far this year. A heavy Acid House sound track accompanies the credits by zooming in and out of the screen, made up of shiny metallic spheres. Sound and graphics in the game itself are equally impressive. Technically excellent.

				ACE RATING
GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	7	**780**
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	7	

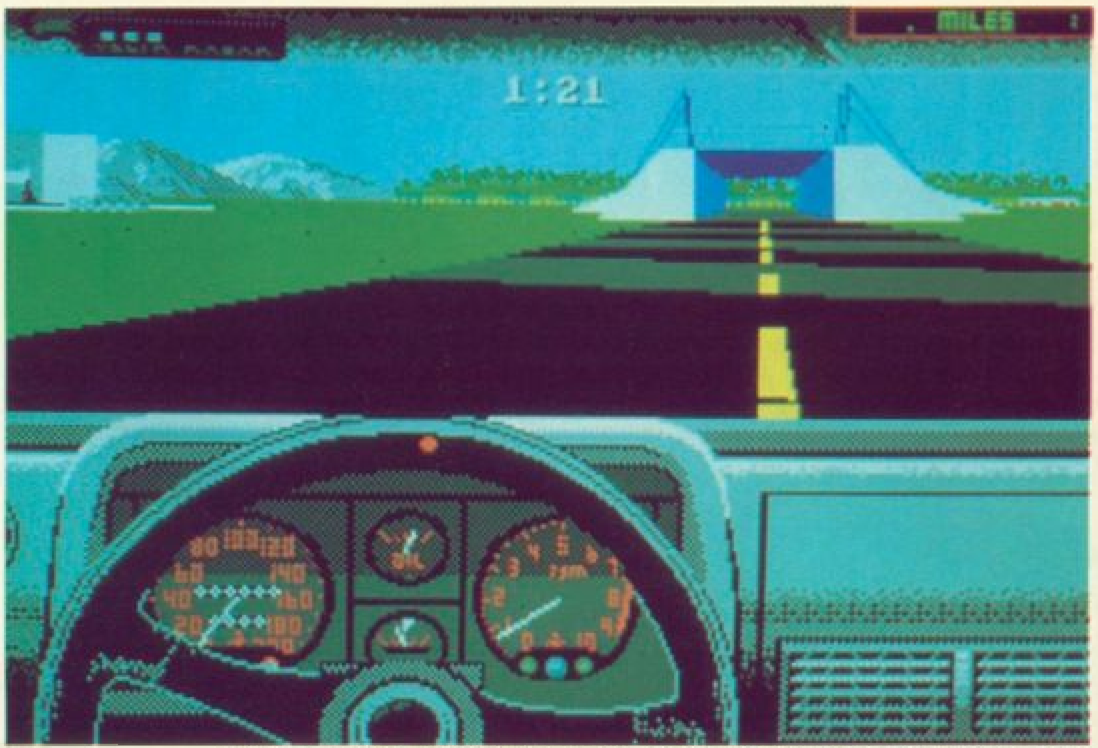
SKID MARKS

DISTINCTIVE SOFTWARE INC/MINDSCAPE slip into top gear and prepare to overtake *Hard Drivin'*

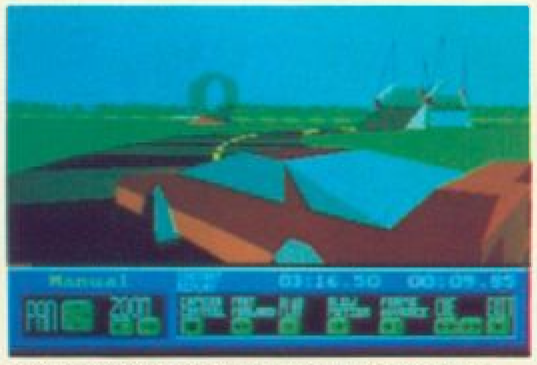
IF I say Distinctive Software Inc., it probably doesn't mean that much to you. But what if I mention *Test Drive, Test Drive II, Hardball, Hardball II, Grand Prix Circuit* and *Cycles*? These games were all developed by DSI and now they've come up with another hot-rod racer, influenced to a fair degree by Tengen's *Hard Drivin'* coin-op.

'Influenced,' spokesman Don Mattrick interjects, "Yes and no. Of course we took a look at *Hard Drivin'* and adapted the things we liked, but we were the first company to produce a racing game with first-person perspective, so in that respect *Hard Drivin'* was influenced by us,' he adds, 'We wanted to take it to the next step, to change the technology from bitmap graphics to advanced 3D generated routines.'

Going under the working title of *Skid Marks*, there's no denying the game's pedigree or performance. The most striking aspect of the game is its resemblance to *Hard Drivin'*, this is mainly due to the two games employing similar 3D polygon/filled vector visual displays. But *Skid Marks* takes pole position over its rival by offering more features, including car model selection, track editor and extensive race replay facilities.



Interior view bears a certain resemblance to other games we have seen, n'est-ce pas?

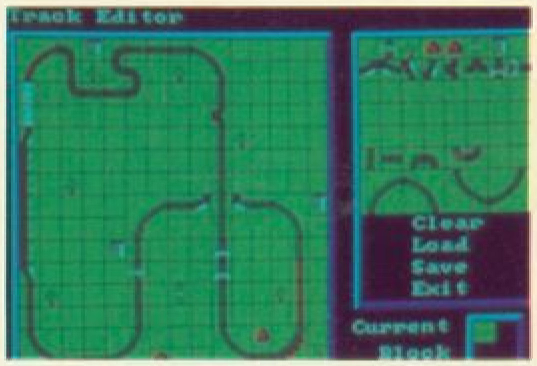


Just one of the excellent multiple view options

You start by choosing your car – in true *Test Drive* fashion – with a rotating 3D model of the current car supplemented by a graph and list of its vital stats. The game will eventually have eight different car types to choose from, including the latest sports cars, classic models and one or two 'weirdoes' like a dune-buggy or a pick-up van with giant wheels. Mattrick explains, 'We've tried to get cars with different attributes and abilities to really make a difference to the gameplay'.

Your then ready to race around a track populated with bridges, raised roads, tunnels, high-rise buildings, loop-the-loop's, slippery surfaces, etc. There's no need to worry if you don't like the track layouts because you've got a built-in track editor which allows you to create, edit, save and load your own track designs.

The overall feeling you get from playing *Skid Marks* is that of immense fun, but it really comes into its own when you use the instant replay options at the end of your race. The numerous options available include automatic where the camera follows your car in a helicopter, manual camera control which allows you to change the outside viewing angle and zoom in/out, and a full-scene Gods-eye view of the proceedings. All this is controlled through VCR-like buttons for play, cue, slow motion and frame advance. Another view option is provided by camera's located around the track, the view switches from one camera to another during the action. You can also adjust these camera's height. I had just as much fun watching a race as I did driving it.



Yup, you can even design your own tracks. This boosts the interest levels quite substantially.

I played an early version of *Skid Marks* on a 8Mhz and 16MHz PC with EGA graphics and was well impressed. It knocks out a fair pace even on slower machines. The PC version also supports CGA, EGA, VGA, MCGA and Tandy graphics modes plus Adlib and Roland sound boards.

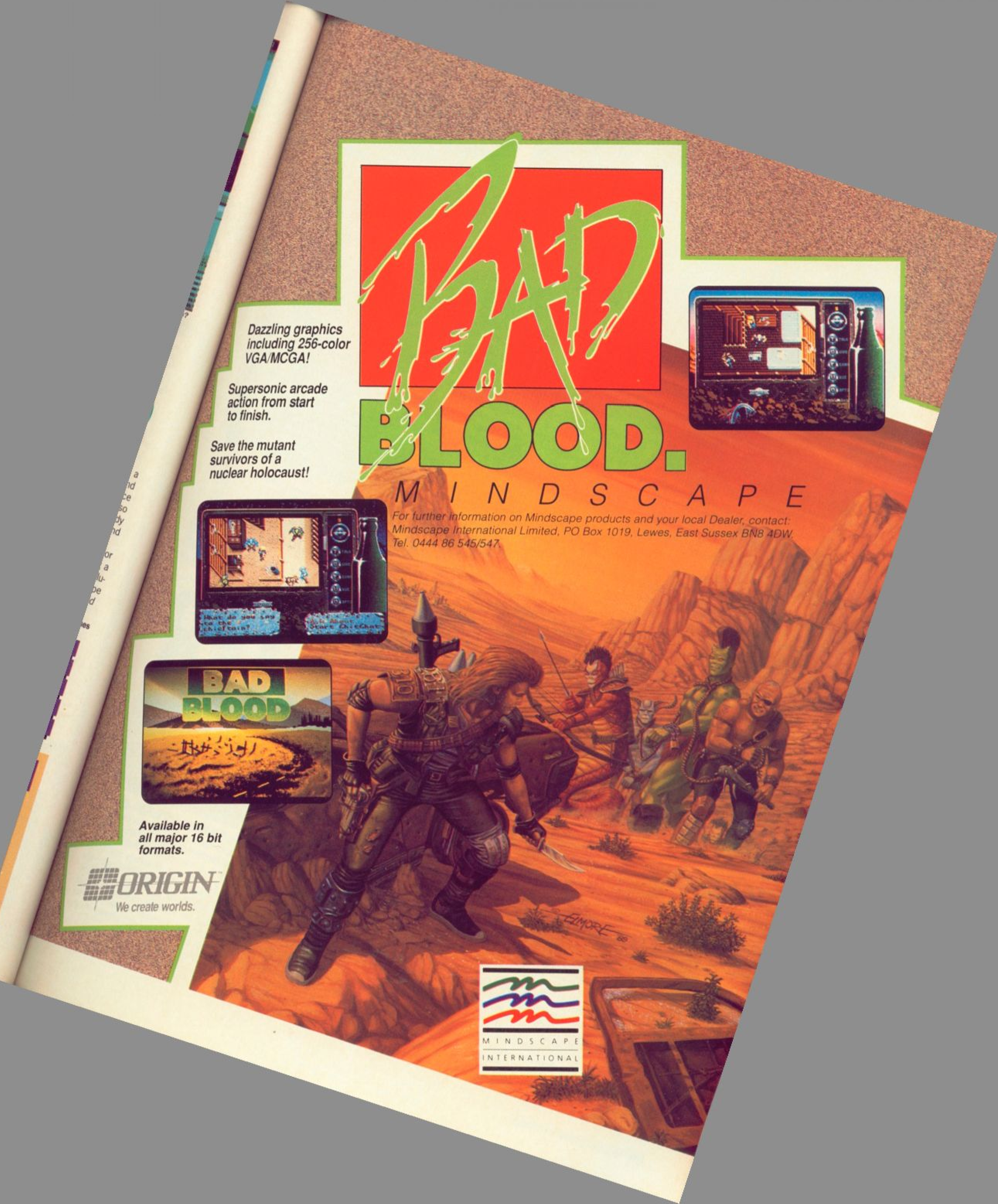
DSI is producing another seven games for Mindscape over the next 12 months, including a couple of sports simulations and a game influenced by *Populous* and *Sim-City*. Let's hope these titles match the expected quality of *Skid Marks*.

● **Rik Haynes**

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
PC	£TBA	TBA
No other versions planned		

DSI WHO??

DSI has developed *over 60 games* in the last eight years. This Canadian company was set up in 1982 by Don Mattrick, an 18 year-old programmer out to 'build a strong team of software engineers, graphic artists and musicians'. Mattrick told ACE: 'At the time everybody was trying to replicate coin-ops, I wanted to write games that utilised the capabilities of the computer". Today DSI has over 70 people working for it, producing games on the Amiga, PC, C64, ST, Macintosh, Apple II GS and Nintendo NES and Gameboy consoles.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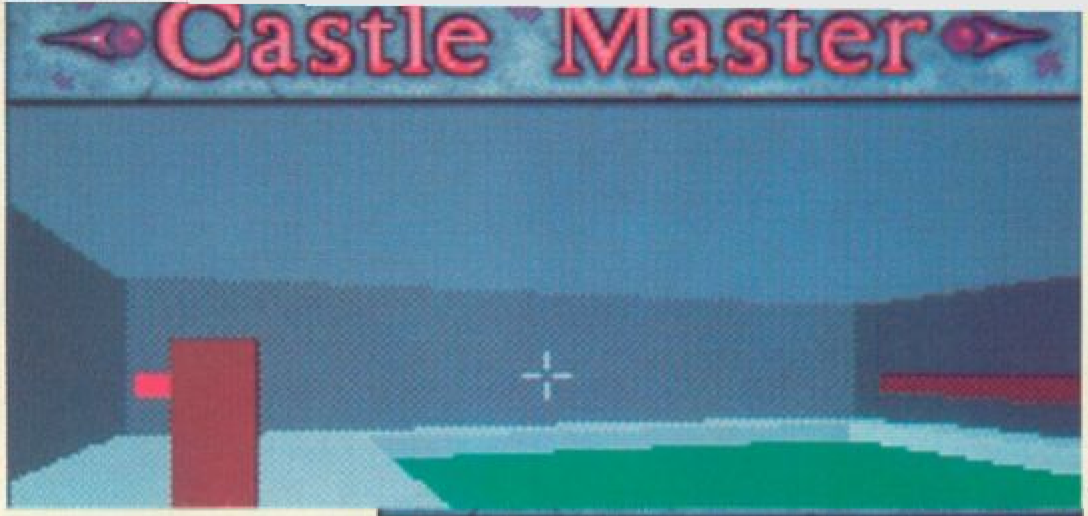
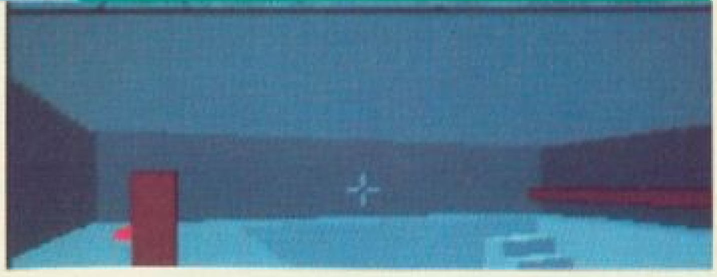
CASTLE MASTER

INCENTIVE/DOMARK

create yet another three-dimensional world to explore

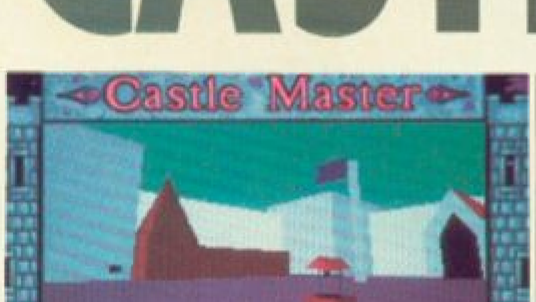




Now you see it - now you don't! An experimental pull on the lever to the left has drained the pool to reveal a stairway down to...?

FREESCAPE which is the system created by Incentive to generate solid vector landscapes and objects, is a good couple of years old now, and has already been the basis for three superb games: *Driller*, *Darkside*, and *Total Eclipse*. Now Incentive have teamed up with Domark for the release of the fourth Freescape game, *Castle Master*, and very welcome it is too.

It seems that on a certain hill all the lines of power in the world converge, and it is there that the powerful Lord of the Old Time, Magister, set up shop. Satisfied that man is so imbecilic he is of no importance, old Magister decides to have a nap for a couple of centuries. He wakes to discover that not only has all his power dissipated but man has got a lot smarter than he was when Magister began his sleep. The sneering locals chuck Magister out of the castle that now sits on the hill, and generally give him a bad time. That is, until Magi-babyx gets his power back and turns the lot of them into evil spirits.



The courtyard shows just how effective the Freescape system can be

It now transpires that your royal twin has been captured and is chained up somewhere within the castle. It is up to you to rescue the captive sibling by breaking into the castle and destroying all the spirits that reside therein.

Unlike *Driller* and *Darkside* which were smaller, puzzle orientated games, *Total Eclipse* and *Castle Master* are both games which involve a lot of exploring, although there is a good deal of brain work involved as well. In *Castle Master* there is a certain amount of fun to be had in just wandering about playing with any switches and levers you find. If you are to make a serious attempt to solve the game however, you will need to explore in a methodical manner and make a map at the same time.

You can now select between running and walking, so traversing long corridors is less of a chore. There is even a crawl option which allows you to examine the underside of tables and such like. There is also a status screen which shows your progress and details keys you have collected.

The keys are needed to access various parts of castle, which is one reason why you should explore each area thoroughly. As well as keys there are also pentacles to be found. These must be collected to allow access to the pentacle vault within one of the castle's towers.

A lot of the problems in *Castle Master* require fairly intense lateral thinking to solve, but dotted around the place are plaques containing cryptic clues which should help you along. As with *Total Eclipse* there are other needs to consider as well as the puzzles. You must also keep your strength up by occasionally munching on pieces of cheese that have been left lying around (obviously there are no mice in this place). There are one or two liquid substances that can be imbibed as well (with varying effects).

What is immediately obvious about *Castle Master* is attention to detail. Try sticking your hand into one of the torches on the wall if you want an example. There are also many things you can do which are not essential to the object of the game, but add to the atmosphere and fun of exploring.

Another nice touch is the non-sexist approach. You can choose whether to play the prince or princess (the remaining character is the one who is rescued), and the choice does actually affect the gameplay.

Like all of the other Freescape games *Castle Master* does have something of a dead feel about it. The rooms and objects generated by the system look a little too much like computer creations – it is the lack of curves that do it. Despite this, *Castle Master* is a very enjoyable game which will appeal to all those who enjoy the satisfaction of suddenly realising the solution to a puzzle that has been pondered over for days. All in all this is a very nice addition to the Freescape range of games.

● **Laurence Scotford**

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
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PC	£29.99dk	IMMINENT

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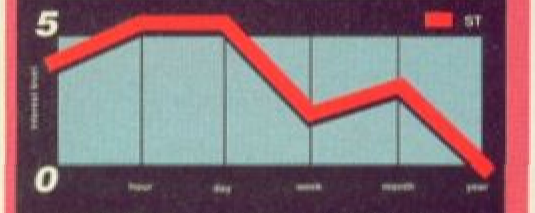

Castle Master is great fun to explore, but you will get the most out of it when you start mapping and playing in earnest. Interest will probably be maintained until you hit a really sticky problem then things could become a little frustrating until the solution hits you – then you can begin exploring again. Of course if you do manage to solve the game you can always try playing the other character or looking for places you haven't been to. Once all that is done then this will probably be consigned to the shelf for good.

ATARI ST

Freescape seems to get faster and smoother with each game, and this one is no exception. The game can be controlled with a combination of mouse, keyboard, and joystick. Sound is limited to fairly functional spot effects, but the graphics are, of course, superlative.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING **835**

OLD BUT GOLD

CHRIS MORLEY UPDATES THE LATEST VERSIONS OF NEW SOFTWARE

PC DRAGON'S LAIR

Empire/ Readysoft ; £44.95 dk
Amiga version reviewed Issue 19;
ACE rating 473

A year or so ago many people were amazed to hear that the coin-op laser disc spectacular, *Dragon's Lair* was to be converted to the popular 16-bit machines, starting with the Amiga. The Amiga version took digitised sound and cel animation from its coin-op parent and contained some 130 megabytes of data on six disks. The game itself casts you as heroic Dirk Daring, who you have to guide through a series of life threatening scenarios in order to rescue your bit of crumpet, Princess Daphne. In order to get through the scenarios and ever closer to the Princess you must use the apparently simple up, down, left and right controls and your trusty sword with split second accuracy.

This is where the conversions fell down. Playability was extremely poor and although the game had some brilliant graphics routines and good sound, trial and error gameplay and constant disk-swapping made the game a disappointment to say the least. So, will the PC version be any better? No.

Instead of six disks there are thirteen. The gameplay is just the same and just as frustrating. Animation is good and quite fast (but if you don't have a hard drive you will have to put up with frequent lengthy disk accessing).

The scenery is fairly impressive but nowhere near the quality of the Amiga version (which was a poor game anyway). Sound effects are non-existent apart from the two different fanfares when you do something right or wrong. In a nutshell, *Dragon's Lair* is a very disappointing game which is unbelievably worse than the other 16-bit versions. *Dragon's Lair* fans would be advised to play the slightly better Amiga or ST versions, (or better still purchase the coin-op machine!) Pretty scenery and fast animation are outweighed by long disk loading time, poor gameplay, indefinite disk-swapping and naff sound effects.

ACE RATING: 447

PRESS BUTTON TO RESUME

DAY OF THE VIPER

Accolade; £24.99 dk;
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 26;
ACE Rating: 625
AMIGA

Day of the Viper is rather a strange game, it is a *3D Monster Maze* cum *Short Circuit* game with *Bard's Tale* style windows and movement controls set in the future.

The object of the it is to guide Viper 5, a remote controlled android, around several floors in five defence base buildings, eradicating the various robots and eventually reactivating the defence computer which should finish off the evil Gar, leader of all the rebellious robots you've had to destroy previously.

This version is almost identical to the ST version and hardly shows off the Amiga's advanced graphics systems. Sound effects are slightly better and opening doors gives a really satisfying 'psssssshhhhhhhhhtt' noise. Perhaps they're the same make as the ones in the Enterprise!!

Although this game is an exciting idea it does actually get quite boring after a while. Walking through identical corridors lightly sprinkled with robots and energy orbs does not keep your interest for long.

ACE RATING: 630

TYPHOON THOMPSON

Broderbund/Domark; £19.99dk;
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 21;
ACE rating: 822
Amiga

Typhoon Thomson was one of the more original games that came out last year, now it is also available on the Amiga.

The plot is quite strange – It is 2124, a few months ago flight 396 crashed into the the ocean. It would appear that there is only one survivor – a child of great importance. Three search parties have already travelled from Earth to ocean planet Aguar – but all have now 'had their chips'. You're in the fourth team and have been forcibly volunteered by your so-called pals to do the deed.

You control your Jet-sled and briefly you have to hover off above the ocean to a cluster of tiny islands. Hovering above the islands are red glowing orbs which, when hit, release various different types of spacecraft, once one of these craft are destroyed its pilot is thrown into the H_2O and, with a nifty bit of flying and diving your Jetsled into the sea, the creature should be 'in the bag'. Once several "sprites" as they are known have been captured you can collect the special item and return it to the mystical good spirits of the planet. After several items have been returned you can begin to rescue the child. Got it?

This version is visually the same as the game on the ST but sound is better. There are some short automatic animation sequences in the game which are quite amusing and entertaining.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable game and should keep you busy for quite some time.

ACE RATING: 825

RISK

Leisure Genius/Parker;
£19.99dk;
C64 version reviewed Issue 16;
ACE rating: 840
Amiga/ST

Risk, is a challenging strategy game in which up to six players have to fight each other to take over countries of the world and complete their set missions. Missions range from "Conquer twenty countries of your choice" to "Defeat your opponents and conquer the world". Gripping stuff.

The release box for the Commodore 64 version stated that ST and Amiga versions were not planned, so aren't we lucky? The verdict box said: "The wrap-round world scolls frustratingly slowly, and the dice rolling sequence would have benefited from being more rapid."

It's been a while coming to the 16-bits and this advice appears to have been taken into account!

You can look around the map of the world by using the mouse, athough scolling the map takes a little bit of practice it is actually quite speedy – much better than 'frustratingly slow'. The dice rolling sequence can be set now, to either manual or automatic and is much faster than that on the C64 game.

Graphically these versions are no big deal, the C64 version made good use of that machine's graphics potential whereas the Amiga version does not. As with the other versions the game doesn't have any music or sound effects, but neither did the *board game!*

Its nice to see that a software house has improved the poorer parts of the game as it was converted from machine to machine.

Player Key
1 4
2 5
3 6
RISK
o play.....

A pleasant change.

ACE RATING: 869

NEVER MIND

Psyclapse; £19.99dk;
PC and Amiga versions reviewed Issue 29;
ACE Ratings 860 and 870 respectively.
ATARI ST

Never Mind is one of the more unusual puzzle games to have been released over recent months. The idea is to guide a man around several isometric 3D 'rooms' in an attempt to reconstruct one or more pictures. While doing this you must contend with a number of hazards including malign chess pieces and disappearing pathways.

The ST version of Never Mind is excellent. The graphics and sound equal the Amiga and the puzzles are drawn equally well. The music to accompany your speedy puzzle solving is fun and adds to the atmosphere of the game.

ACE RATING: 879

SPACE HARRIER II

Grandslam; £19.99dk;
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 30;
ACE rating: 819
AMIGA

The second "zooming chessboard" shoot 'em up is now available on the Amiga and jolly good it is too.

Jetboarding is a laugh and so is shooting raging aliens so you've decided to combine the two and rescue Fantasyland (which is in crisis) all in one afternoon. You can jet all around the screen and as the ground below you speeds along various nasties pop up and try to exterminate you.

Graphically it is stunning and the sheer speed of the game is also very impressive. Sound effects are much better on the Amiga version and there is fast paced soundtrack to match.

ACE RATING:825

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HEAVY METAL

The masters of the battlefield are now invading your micro. Rik Haynes discovers how you can get in on the fun...

Ever since their first military action back in World War One, tanks have dominated the 20th Century battlefield. Their mere presence creates a psychological fear seldom caused by any other piece of military equipment. Tanks can bring both a repressive and liberating force to any armed conflict. Who can forget the episode in China's Tiernamen Square last year, when a solitary student tried to thwart the progress of a 35-ton tank after his fellow campaigners had been slaughtered? Yet Rumania's counter-revolution at Christmas was heralded by soldiers giving their tanks over to the civilians in a sign of unity – the people then triumphantly riding the tanks through the streets of Rumania. Both equally compelling scenes, both showing the over-whelming strength of the tank. But this was not always the case.

LITTLE WILLIE AND THE LANDSHIPS

Despite the forward thinking and dreams of futurists like Leonardo De Vinci and HG Wells, tanks were originally invented to fulfil a specific purpose: to stop the stalemate of World War One trench warfare. In February 1915, the Landship Committee – headed by Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty – was created to develop the concept of armed and armoured vehicles. As most members of the committee came from a Naval background, these machines were dubbed Landships.

In August 1915, the Landship Committee commissioned William Foster & Co to build a prototype tank. Little Willie was the first successful armoured tracked vehicle, originally fitted with a turret, 6mm of armour and a top road speed of 3.2km/h. Other prototypes followed – including Mother (Big Willie) – culminating in the Mark I, the first tank to enter service with the British Army.

The British Army formed a new unit in May 1916 – known as the Heavy Section for security reasons – equipped with 150 Mark I tanks. The Mark I had the classic rhomboidal shape in order to negotiate trenches and other obstacles found on the WWI battlefield. It came in two versions: Male and Female. The Male model was armed with two 6-pounder QF guns and two 8mm Hotchkiss machine-guns, while Female had four 7.7mm Vickers machine-guns and one Hotchkiss machine-gun. Both versions were crewed by eight, had armour of 6-12mm, a top road speed of 5.95km/h, bad suspension, horribly cramped and unpleasant conditions, and were very unreliable.

The tank first saw action at Flers-Courcelette on 15th September 1916. Despite heavy loses, they performed well – easily quashing enemy resistance, reaching and over-running their assigned objectives. The future of the tank was assured.

PANZER BLITZKRIEG

After the First World War, Britain frittered away its lead in tank technology by producing relatively useless light tank designs. Elsewhere, tank-tech was developing at a phenomenal rate. Military strategists such as Britain's General Fuller and Captain Hart and the French General Estienne suggested the formation of a new armoured mobile force. In 1927 the British Army set up such a unit, The Experimental Mechanised Force. This formed the basis for Germany's Panzer Divisions and their successful Blitzkrieg campaigns at the beginning of World War Two.

Ignoring the armaments restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, Germany secretly carried on tank development in conjunction with Russia until rearmament started in 1933. Mobility was foremost in German military strategy, with the tank taking a central role. The first Panzer Division was formed in 1935, these were effectively separate armies with their own logistical and air support. At the height of WWII, Germany had 30 such divisions. Heinz Guderian, leading German tank theorist and adviser to Hitler was the main driving force behind the Panzer concept and its ultimate application: Blitzkrieg, a mobile war fought with mechanised forces in-conjunction with air-support.

During WWII, Germany produced the most famous and feared tank in the history of armoured warfare: the Tiger. In 1937, the German general staff decided they needed a heavy 'breakthrough' tank to head-up armoured assaults. The result was the Tiger, a tank personally endorsed by Hitler. This monster was armed with the excellent 88mm KwK36 L/56 gun (which was originally an Anti-Aircraft gun) with 92 rounds of ammunition, had 26-110mm of armour, a top road speed of 38km/h, and a crew of five. Tiger was the most feared tank on the WWII battlefield. In 1944, a single Tiger held up an entire Allied division in France, destroying 25 tanks before being outflanked. German tank crews used Tigers aggressively, they were a favourite of Hitler's crack Waffen-SS units. Unfortunately, Tigers were ill-suited to the Russian campaign – the poor ground and cold weather caused high casualties, especially at the Battle of Kursk in 1943. Despite their notoriety, only 1300 Tiger I's were ever produced.

SOVIET SUPREMACY

The Soviet's are, to this day, the biggest exponents of armoured warfare. Their revolutionary tank designs have kept them at the forefront of mobile combat since the introduction of the T-34 during WWII. However, until recently they have been better known for quantity rather than quality. The sloped 'shell-proof' armour of the T-34 – designed by MI Koshkin in 1937 – changed the course of tank development. Soviet tanks have been involved in every armoured conflict since WWII, including the 1967/1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the Iran-Iraq, Korean and Vietnam wars. In 1962 the Russians further developed the concept of mechanised warfare with the introduction of the BMP-1 IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle) which allowed infantry to keep up with the tanks in a protected and armed vehicle. Every mechanised force in the world now has an IFV in service. Overall, Soviet armoured warfare strategy works on a simple principle: sheer weight of numbers.

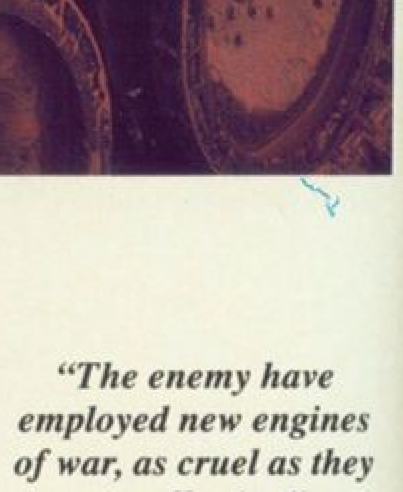
If you want to find out more about tanks and armoured warfare then check out the Royal Armoured Corps Museum at Bovington in Dorset. The following books may also prove useful: *Modern Land Combat* by Christopher F Foss and David Miller (Salamander Books), *Team Yankee* by Major HW Coyle (Presidio Press) or *Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army – New Edition* by David Isby (Jane's Publishing Company). Alternatively, why not play a tank simulation or game on your micro?

NOW IT'S YOUR CHANCE

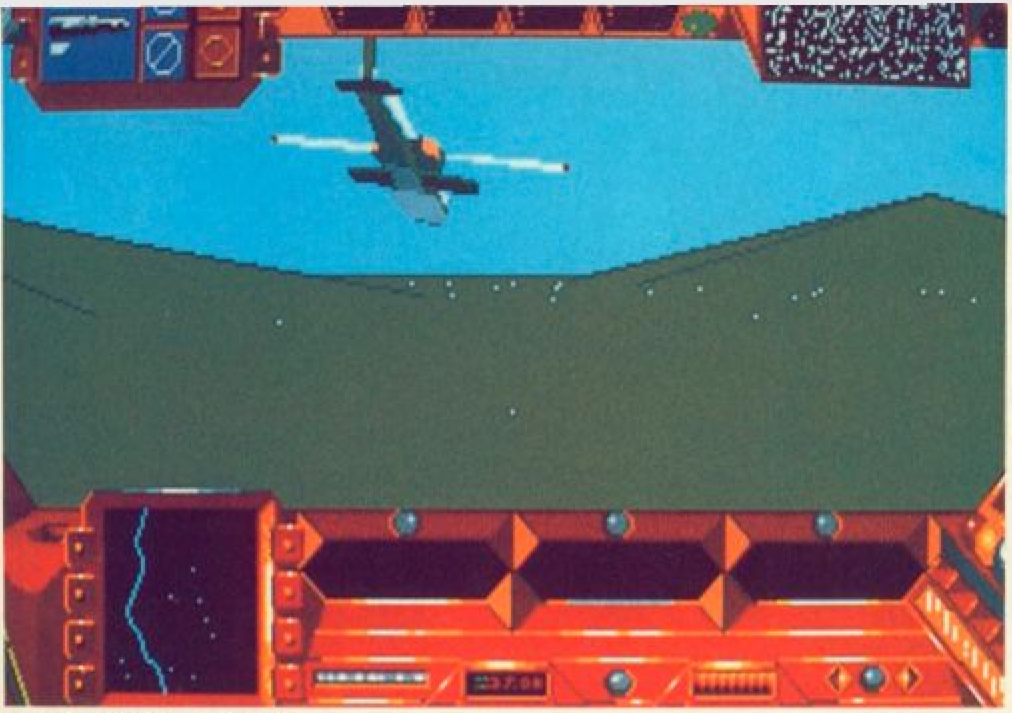
Tanks are a favourite subject for computer games, at least that is, ever since the introduction of a cult coin-op called *Battlezone* back in 1982. This 3D vector-graphic shoot'em-up from Atari was based around futuristic tank warfare, and contained gameplay so absorbing and addictive that nobody has ever managed to better it... but that hasn't stopped anybody from trying.

The range of tank simulations and games is impressive, though I've never seen a WWI tank game – yet! Every computer system from the Atari VCS console to the Macintosh has at least one tank game available for it, whether they're commercially on sale or in the Public Domain. In fact, the VCS has one of the best tank games around – and it came bundled free with the machine. *Combat* has a variety of graphically primitive and very simple tank and plane games.

> ***"The enemy have employed new engines of war, as cruel as they are effective."***
>
> **Chief of Staff of the German Third Army commenting on the first use of tanks during World War One**



Realtime Games homage to Battlezone on the Spectrum



Exclusive ACE shots of Battle Command

TANK TRIVIA

- Britain originally coined the phrase 'Tanks' to confuse German spies into thinking the new British armoured fighting vehicles were water carriers for the desert.
- The Saint Chamond, a French tank of WWI, had a fatal overhang that caused the tank's nose to become embedded in the far side of a trench.
- Hitler personally watched the first demo of the Jagdpanther tank destroyer on 20th October, 1943.
- 48000 Sherman tanks had been built by the end of WWII.
- During the later stages of WWII, German AFVs were coated with Zimmerit anti-magnetic-mine paste.

All have the same basic objective – to hit your opponent as many times as possible before your time limit of two minutes 16 seconds expires. Gameplay variations include straight, guided or billiard hit missiles, open field, easy or complex mazes, tank-pong or invisible tank games. *Combat* gameplay may date back to 1977, but you can still jack into your VCS and have a go at tank-pong or invisible tank. Todays software houses could learn a lot from playing Atari's *Combat* cartridge.

COMMAND AND CONQUEROR

For more up to date computerised tank warfare, you could do a lot worse than Rainbow Arts' *Conqueror.* Originally out on the Archie from Superior Software, this tank strategy arcade game uses the same graphic routines developed by David '*Elite*' Braben in his *Virus* shoot'em-up. It simulates a 3D perspective landscape using patchwork cubes and filled vector graphics. *Conqueror* is available on ST, Amiga, PC and Archimedes. Unfortunately no 8-bit versions are planned, "because of the size of the game".

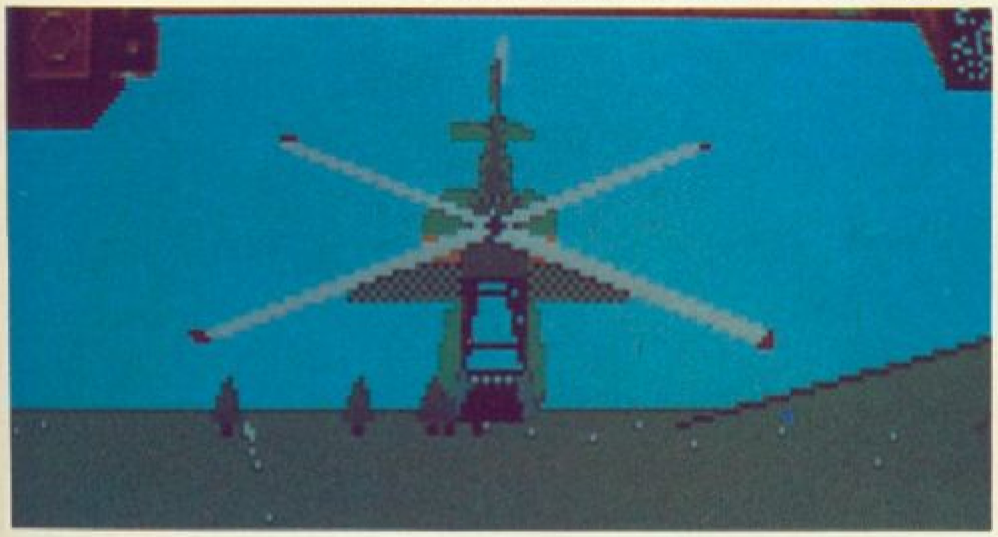
If your gameplaying tastes are more strategic, look out for *Fire-Brigade* from Australia's Panther Games, distributed in the UK by Mindscape. Set around the Battle of Kiev in 1943, you control German or Russian forces in "the most mobile and decisive battle of World War Two". Have you got what it takes to command the 48th Panzer Korps? *Fire-Brigade* is played in the timeless wargame map-fashion, and is available on Amiga (one-meg babies only), ST, PC and Macintosh. Also via Mindscape is *Omega* from Origin, a futuristic strategy game where you take the role of a cyber-engineer out to create the ultimate cybertank. Available on ST, Amiga, PC and C64 (disk only), Omega is one for the thinking tank fan, it's the sort of game that would appeal to programmers and those with a logical-mind.

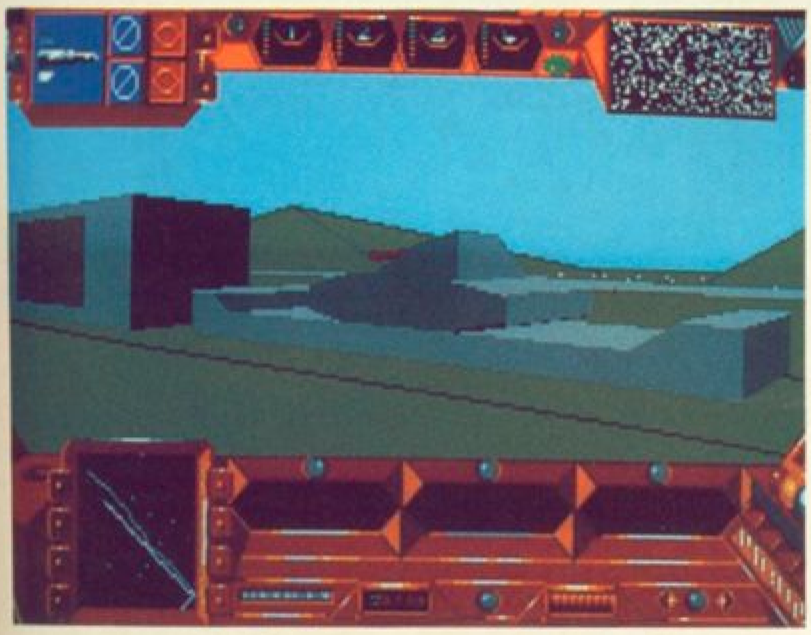
Undoubtedly the hippest tank in the simulation software stakes is the M1A1 ABRAMS – Main Battle Tank of the US Army. There are currently no fewer than four tank simulations featuring this particular piece of multi-million dollar hardware: *M1 Tank Platoon* by Microprose (PC with ST and Amiga versions due in summer), *Tank* from Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft (PC EGA only, ST and Amiga due in late summer along with the possibility of a PC CGA version), Electronic Arts' *ABRAMS Battle Tank* (PC) and *Steel Thunder* courtesy of Accolade (PC and C64). If that wasn't enough, Empire is currently writing a computer game version of the *Team Yankee* novel by Major HW Coyle. Again, the M1 ABRAMS will feature quite predominately in this release as it's based on a tank commander's experiences during World War III. There will be two versions of *Team Yankee*: a 16-bit simulation on ST, Amiga and PC due in July, and an 8-bit action game for Spectrum, C64 and CPC set for autumn release.

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited tank game is Ocean's *Battle Command,* the successor to Realtime Games' *Carrier Command.* Here's the scenario: the Ultra Wars are in a parallel universe where North is slugging it out with South, and both sides are getting nowhere. Then the North develops an attack vehicle that can penetrate enemy lines and alone wreck havoc where whole battalions have failed in the past. You control such a vehicle in a series of missions of ever increasing difficulty. "Battling against mind-numbing odds and heroically fighting through are all part of a day's work in this 3D all-action tour de force," according to a Realtime Games' spokesperson. *Battle Command* will initially be released on ST, Amiga and PC during the summer – Spectrum 128K, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC versions will follow soon after.

BATTLE ON TO THE 31ST C

If the FASA Corporation is to be believed, tanks will be replaced by giant human-like robots by the 31st Century. FASA's *Battletech* concept is based on the superlative *Robotech* TV cartoon series and comics – illustrated by Japanese animators, story by America's Harmony Gold, beamed out on satellite channels around the world. If the idea of controlling a 70-ton Mech armed with lasers, autocannons and missiles appeals to you then you can play the FASA *Battletech* role-playing board-games or two Activision *Battletech* computer games on ST, Amiga, PC and C64. That's not all, soon you'll be able to play "the world's first complete computer simulation experience for play", when FASA/ESP opens up its first multi-player *Battletech Centre* game simulator. You'll experience the thrills of Mech combat from inside your own enclosed cockpit fed by 16 million colour ray-traced images and spatial sound, while pitting your wits against another human-being, not a computer controlled opponent. I can't wait.



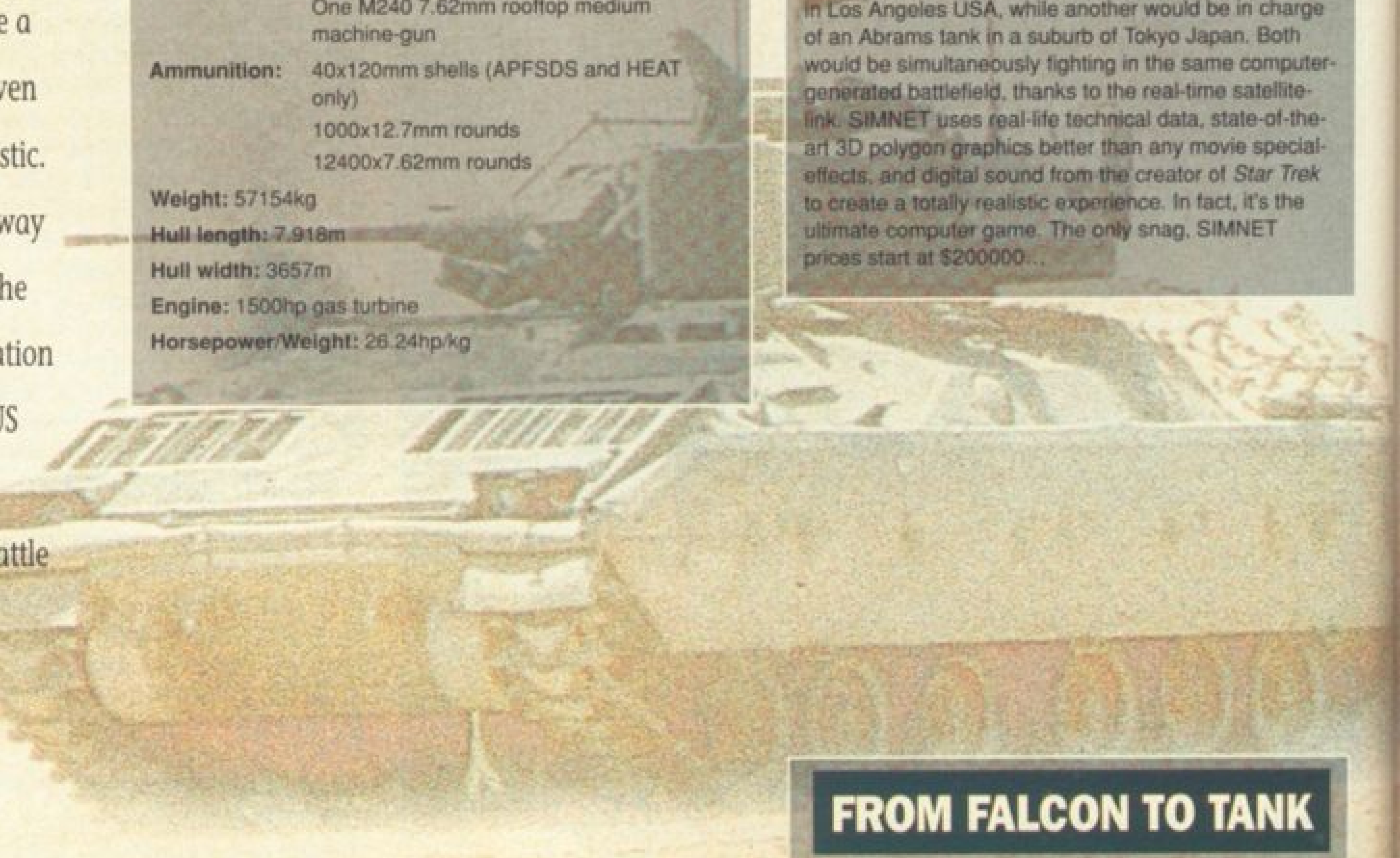


Battle Command: up close to a heli-gunship

In Command, could Battle be better than Carrier?

Taking an Abrams out

Driving round the countryside in a 57-tonne armed & armoured monster blasting everything in sight does have a certain appeal, even if it is a little sadistic. And what better way to do it, than in the best micro simulation (thus far) of the US Army's M1A1 ABRAMS Main Battle Tank, courtesy of Microprose...



TECH SPEC

M1A1 "ABRAMS" Main Battle Tank

Main Gun: One M256 120mm smooth-bore cannon with muzzle velocity of 5450 feet/second

Machine-Guns: One M2HB 12.7mm rooftop heavy machine-gun
One M240 7.62mm coaxial medium machine-gun
One M240 7.62mm rooftop medium machine-gun

Ammunition: 40x120mm shells (APFSDS and HEAT only)
1000x12.7mm rounds
12400x7.62mm rounds

Weight: 57154kg

Hull length: 7.918m

Hull width: 3657m

Engine: 1500hp gas turbine

Horsepower/Weight: 26.24hp/kg

SIMNET

If micro-based simulations of armoured warfare are a little too low-rent for you, perhaps you should try the US Defense Forces SIMNET, a multi-player, satellite networked, combat simulator. SIMNET re-creates war in a simulated 50-square kilometers of anywhere in the world – whether it be downtown Beruit or Southend-on-Sea seafront. Its global appeal doesn't stop there either, one person could control an Apache helicopter gunship in Los Angeles USA, while another would be in charge of an Abrams tank in a suburb of Tokyo Japan. Both would be simultaneously fighting in the same computer-generated battlefield, thanks to the real-time satellite-link. SIMNET uses real-life technical data, state-of-the-art 3D polygon graphics better than any movie special-effects, and digital sound from the creator of *Star Trek* to create a totally realistic experience. In fact, it's the ultimate computer game. The only snag, SIMNET prices start at $200000...

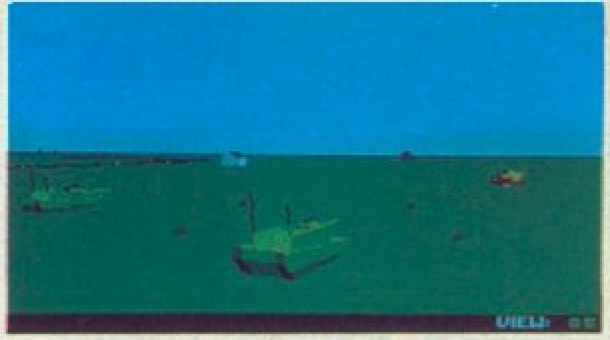
TAKING COMMAND

- Development of the M1A1 "ABRAMS" main battle tank began in 1972. Chrysler Corporation's design was chosen in 1976, and the first production model came off the line in 1980. General Dynamics took over Chrysler's tank manufacturing business in 1982, and now the M1A1 is produced by the "Land Systems Division" of General Dynamics in Detriot, Michigan and Lima, Ohio.
- The M1A1 has the extremely heavy and top secret Chobham armour – a laminate with steel and ceramic layers – upgraded with a layer of depleted uranium, making HEAT warheads almost totally ineffective and giving it better protection against Sabot rounds. Unfortunately, it's only protected in the important frontal areas of the hull and turret – the rest of the tank has only normal steel-based armour susceptible to both HEAT and Sabot rounds.
- The automatic fire suppression system in the driver, turret and engine compartments has heat sensors which trigger halon gas, "starving" the fire of oxygen without injuring the crew or the equipment.

FROM FALCON TO TANK

The latest tank simulation on the market is *Tank*, from Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Written by the author of *Falcon*, *Tank* is another simulation of the ABRAMS M1A1 Main Battle Tank. An interesting aspect of the game is that it's based on the SIMNET simulation (see SIMNET box for further details). Features include: three theatres of action (Fort Knox, Central Europe and the Middle East); 16 tanks under your command at a company, platoon or individual level; and three 600000 acre battlefield areas. *Tank* is available now on PC for £34.99dk (EGA/VGA only). ST and Amiga translations will follow later in the year, along with the possibility of a CGA PC version.

Our first encounter with the enemy...

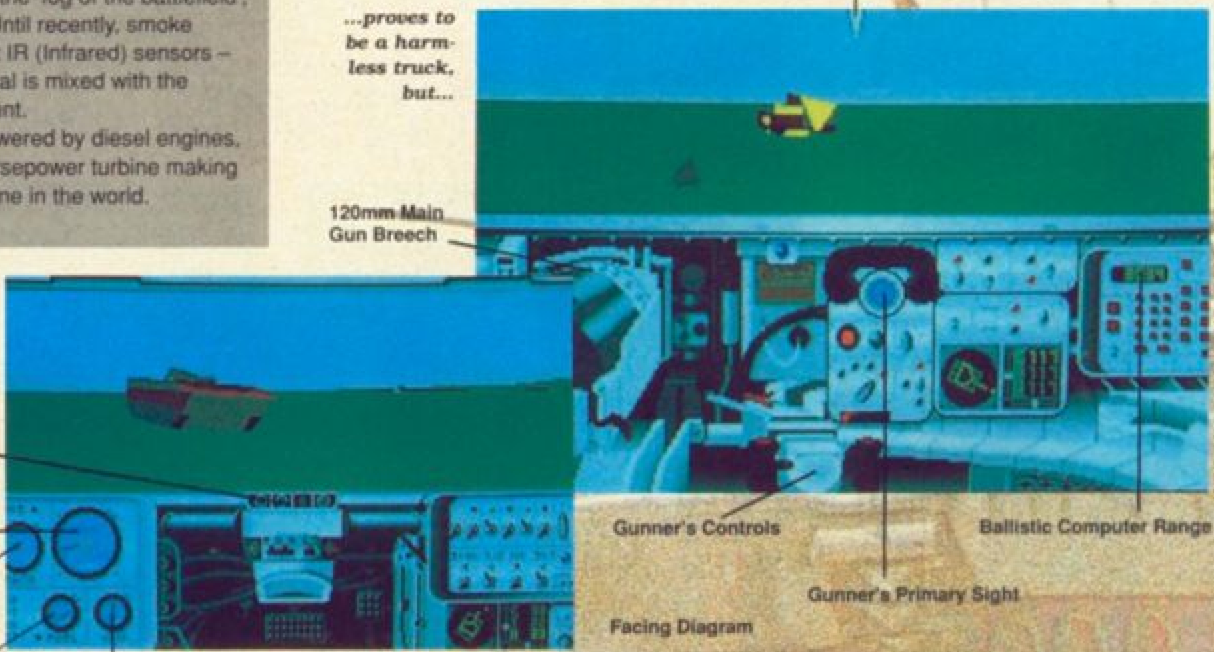


for a Test Drive

IN THE DRIVING SEAT

- The driver is the only crewperson in the hull and has controls similar to a motorcycle.
- As well as two six-grenade smoke launchers mounted on the turret, the M1A1 has an engine exhaust smoke generator controlled by the driver which injects fuel into the hot exhaust producing a surging smoke screen. The smoke screen is the 'fog of the battlefield', used to confuse the enemy. Until recently, smoke screens were useless against IR (Infrared) sensors – now a heat-absorbing chemical is mixed with the smoke to confuse IR equipment.
- Whereas most tanks are powered by diesel engines, the M1A1 has a gas 1500 horsepower turbine making it the most powerful tank engine in the world.

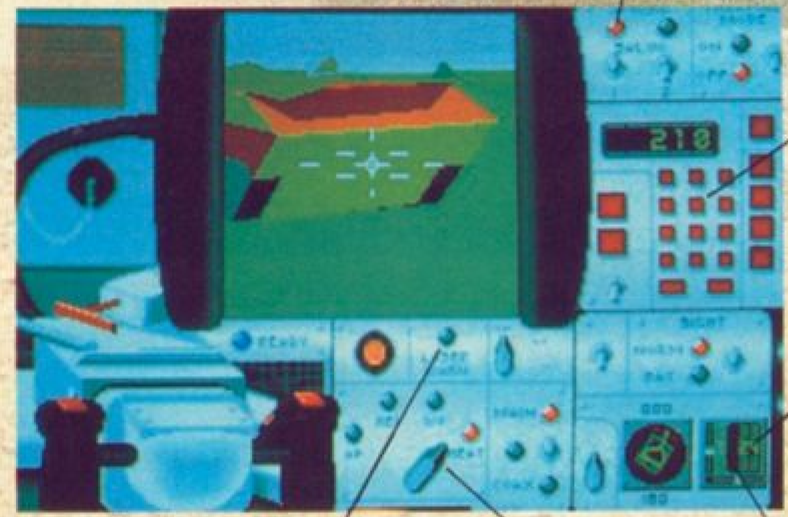
...proves to be a harmless truck, but...


M2HB caliber .50 Heavy Machine-gun
120mm Main Gun Breech
Gunner's Controls
Ballistic Computer Range Readout
Gunner's Primary Sight
Facing Diagram
Master Caution/Master Warning
Speedometer
Tachometer
Fuel Gauge
Electrical Power Guage

...we soon come across an armoured IFV...

GUNNING FOR ACTION

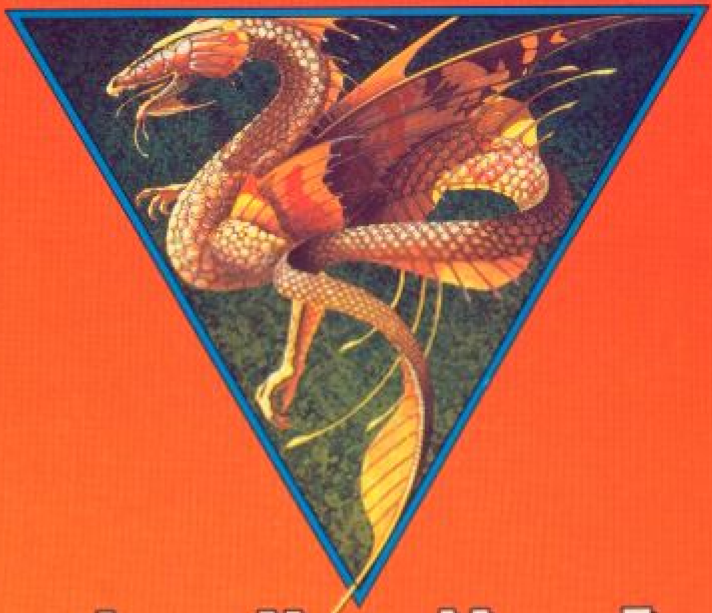
- The West German 120mm smooth-bore gun fires either armour-piercing "sabot" or high-explosive HEAT rounds. Sabot is the most powerful armour-piercing round available, it's a kinetic energy penetrator and therefore has no explosive power – it just punches a hole through armour.
- The Sabot ammunition can penetrate 243mm of armour at a range of 3000 meters, while the HEAT round is capable of penetrating 455mm of flat steel, 202mm of reactive plating and 180mm of composite armour.
- The 40 rounds of 120mm ammunition are stored in the rear of the turret, separated from the crew area by sliding doors. The loader opens the ammo-compartments just long enough to reload the main gun.
- The main gun is vertically and horizontally stabilised, with a ballistic computer slaved to the gunsight automatically providing superelevation – raising the gun barrel for the correct range.
- M1A1 has "cant" sensors that correct the vehicle when sitting on an angled slope, and a cross-wind sensor for detecting wind direction and speed for the ballistic computer.


Smoke Grenade Launcher Controls
Ballistic Computer
218
Facing Digital Readout
(C-commander)
(T-turret)
(H-hull)
Ammunition Switch
Laser Warning Light
Controller Positions

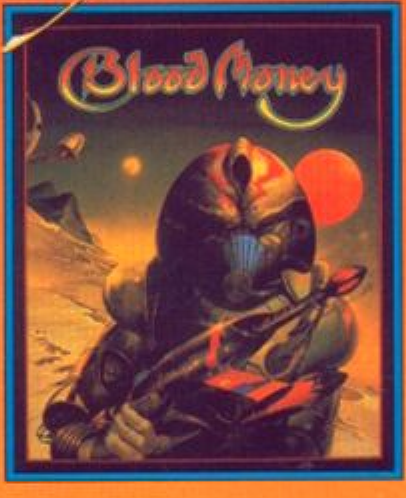
...though our 120mm will easily sort this joker out!

ARCADE · ACTION · ADVENTURE

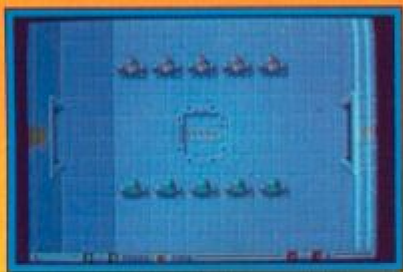
T'RI'A'D

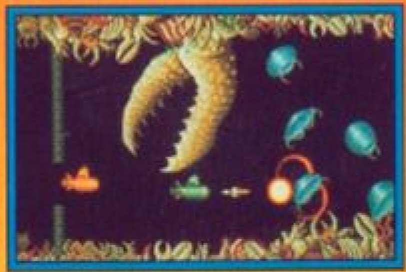


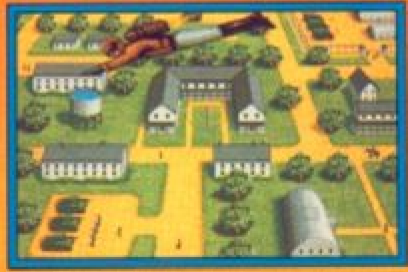
VOLUME · 3



CINEMAWARE
ROCKET
RANGER







Speedball - total action - total aggression - the ultimate sport from the Bitmap Brothers.

Computer Gamesweek - 94%
"Speedball is fast, furious and graphically very stylish"

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"Never in the field of reviewing has such an excellent game been played by so many for so long. A must buy!"

C&VG Hit -
"Speedball is going to be a monster hit"

ST/Amiga Format Gold Disk Award! - 90%
"This game is so visually brilliant and possesses those classic addictive qualities that once you've picked up your joystick you just won't want to put it back down again".

C + VG Hit!
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Ace Rating - 814
"Superb graphics with arcade action and strategy - probably the best Cinemaware game yet".

New Computer Express
"Break out a spare can of Buddy and pop up your PC for this one".

CINEMAWARE

MIRROR Soft

image works

The BITMAP BROTHERS

PSYGNOSIS

Distribution by: Mirrorsoft Ltd., Irwin House, 118 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SW

AMIGA/ATARI ST/PC £29.99

THE ULTIMATE DUNGEON MASTER GUIDE

(FINAL PART)

Well *Dungeon Master* fans, here it is: the final part of Les Rigden's guide, which details levels 9 to 14 of the game. Now you've no excuses for not completing the whole thing.

LEVEL 9

Items to be found: Storm Ring, Pendant Feral, Green Magic Box, Blue Magic Box, Rope, 2 Chests, Corbamite, Flask, 2 Torches, Skeleton Key, Green Gem.

'When is rock not rock' – Take one step left and walk through the wall. It is a good idea to mark this place in case you need to return in a hurry. Turning left will bring you into a gated room. Search for a button to open a secret room.

A short distance after you pass the wall you can walk through, on your right, is an invisible field which turns you through 180°. This can be confusing, so don't rush.

After passing through a gate, keep to the left while searching for a button to open a secret room.

The next gate you come to will lead to some downward stairs, ignore these, there is nothing in the room below.

You will find an unopenable gate with a chest beyond and a lever to the right. The lever opens a pit dropping the chest into a room below (mentioned earlier). With the pit closed, explore the passage to your right to find an upward staircase. Go up and you will find a pit to your right which will drop you behind the gate. Search for a button before dropping down the pit.

'What is under foot is soon overhead' – the passage ahead has 3 floor buttons on each side. As you step on each, a fireball is fired at you. You must place an item on each floor button moving away quickly to avoid being hit (this only need be done on one side).

Two exits are found on the other side of the floor buttons. The left hand one takes you through a series of passages and rooms at the end of which you will find a button to open a secret room.

'Lighter than a feather' – Corbamite weighs nothing, use it to open the gate by placing it in the alcove.

The last gated room on this level contains an important item.

Level 10

Items to be found: 2 keys of B, Hard Cleave, Shield of Lyte, Armet, 2 FUL Bombs, Speed Bow, Water Flask, Moonstone, Boots of Speed, Torso Plate, Leg Plate, Foot Plate, Magnifier.

'Beware my twisted humour, the deceiver, the snake' – you must snake your way through the pillars, going first to the extreme left, the right, left, and right again, to find an opening on your left. Which ever passage you use the key of B to open, they both end up at the same point. Check the items dropped by anything you kill, to find a second key of B to get you out.

'Zooooom' – as you step on the first pad you will be moved around the room until you successfully step off into the passage on the other side. Precise timing is required to get off the moving pads . Halfway round the room you will find a blue haze with a space beside it. If you decide to enter this space, be careful, as the haze will transport you to the very beginning of the level.

The next gate you come to opens into a large irregularly shaped room. If you press the button just after the gate you will release monsters that are held in fields around the room. If you walk straight ahead of you, you will come to monsters guarding a button to open a short secret passage to the right.

As you leave this room, the fields containing the monsters will be turned off releasing them. As you travel along the corridor you will find a gated room on the left, enter and search for a button to open a secret panel. This room may be transported back into at a later stage.

A monster will drop a skeleton key when killed in the passages to come, so look out for it.

Two secret rooms are to be found in the following corridors so check the walls and back track to find the rooms after pressing buttons which have no obvious immediate effect.

You will soon come to two gates almost side by side, these should be closed to allow you time to plan ahead, and, when threatened, to run back and fight from.

Further along the passages you will find another two gates a little further apart than the previous two, they should be closed as before.

A room will be found with a brown button on the wall, this button transports you back to the room mentioned earlier. This could be useful if trapped by pursuing monsters.

Level 11

Items to be found: Fury, Diamond Edge, 2 Poison Darts, Staff, Sabre, Morning Star, Boots of Speed, Foot Plate, Plate of Lyte, Greave of Lyte, Poleyn of Lyte, VEN Potion, 2 FUL Bombs, 2 Green Magic Boxes, Skeleton Key, 2 Cross keys, Ruby Key, Chest.

As you enter this level you will be confronted with a rectangular passaged room. There are four of these rooms and an invisible transporter moves you between them. Figure 1 shows transporters (**T**), a staircase (**S**), a gate (**G**), and a chest (**C**). **W** marks the location of the secret panel which is your way out. As you move around the rooms you must find a key to open the gate in room number 4. This gate will not open immediately, step back and wait for a moment. Open the chest and take out the key. This must be turned in the keyhole on the wall of one of the rooms to open the panel and allow you out.

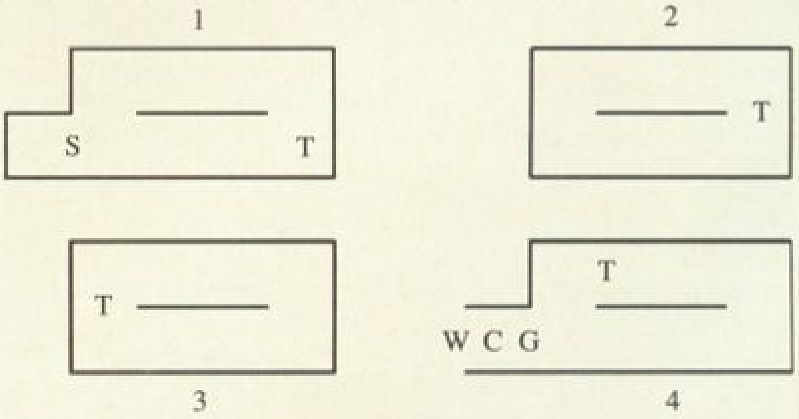


Fig. 1

When you finally escape the rooms, go down the corridor to the right and through the gate. You are in a passage with many holes in the wall. Go to the end of the passage, you will find a useful item. When you pick up this item the corridor will fill with poison gas. Have plenty of VI potions handy and wait until the gas has gone while drinking the potions to stay alive. Once you have survived the gas, regain your strength because the next step forwards will release gas further along and fire 2 poison darts at you. Two more, more gas. Be patient, let all the gas clear and you will survive this puzzle.

Search the next gated room to find a handy weapon.

As you search further you will come to a short passage just around a right turn with another short passage behind you on your left. Step back around the corner and wait a moment for the panel to open. You will find a button on the right wall where the panel was. Press to reveal skeleton key.

You will come to a gate behind which are three gates. On the floor is a Cross Key to open only one of them, they all lead to the same place. You need to find copper coins in the passages to use later on. The centre door is probably the easiest to get through. Search carefully for those copper coins. When you have emerged from your chosen passage, find the exit gate (far right). Search carefully in the corridors to come, for a butt to open a secret room.

Later you will come to double gates. Beyond these is a left turn leading to a gate after which you can use your skeleton key.

'Enlarge my view' – Use the magnifier to open a secret panel, step on pad to find the ruby key.

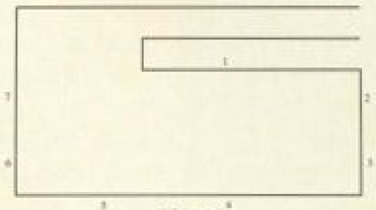


Fig. 2

At the end of the passage with the double gates is a room with 7 coin slots in the wall. Copper coins will open alcoves containing useful items (listed later).

See Figure 2:

1) VEN potion
2) FUL bomb
3) Green magic box, FUL bomb
4) 2 Copper coins
5) Cross key
6) Chest of Food
7) Green magic box

Open number 4 first to reveal more copper coins. If you don't have enough coins for all the slots, open 5, take the cross key and walk all the way back to the start of the three gates where you first used a cross key, and explore another passage for more copper coins.

Level 12

Items to be found: Greave of Darc, Shield of Darc, Plate of Darc, Poleyn of Darc, Helm of Darc, Helm of Lyte, Morning Star, Slayer, Snake Staff, 2 FUL bombs, VEN potion, Boots of Speed, Torch, Master Key, Emerald Key, Topaz Key, Skeleton Key.

At the end of the first corridor is a large room. Two paces right into room are a series of pits opened and closed by the pressure pad you just stepped on. You can see a broken black line when the pit is open.

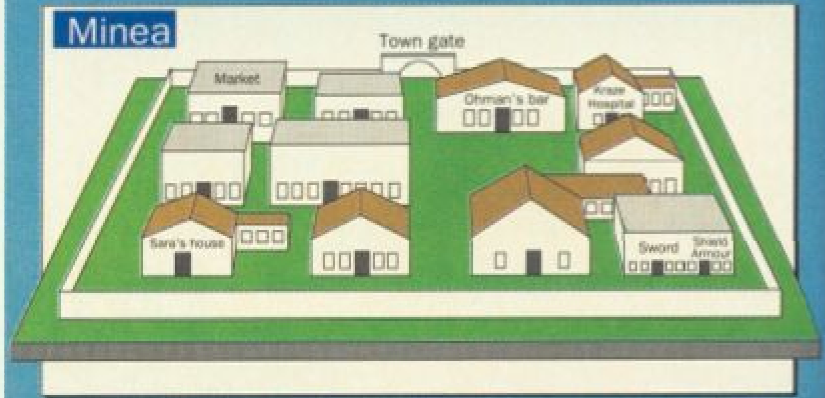
Taking the right hand exit from the pit room you pass a gate requiring a key to open. Keep to the left and enter a small room, press the large button found here on the left in an alcove and return to the pit room. Now take the other exit, ignore the gate on the right and enter another larger room. In the middle of this room is a small room with a key in it. Take the key and return to the room you passed which required a key (mentioned earlier). After the door has been opened, the monster within must be killed to make it drop a key, dropping it down a pit in the other room is advised. You must then climb down to retrieve the key. Use the rope to get down, if you picked it up on an earlier level, If not, you will have to drop down.

Level 14

Items to be found: Square Key. Eye of Time, Calista, numerous Coins, Blue Gems, Green gem.

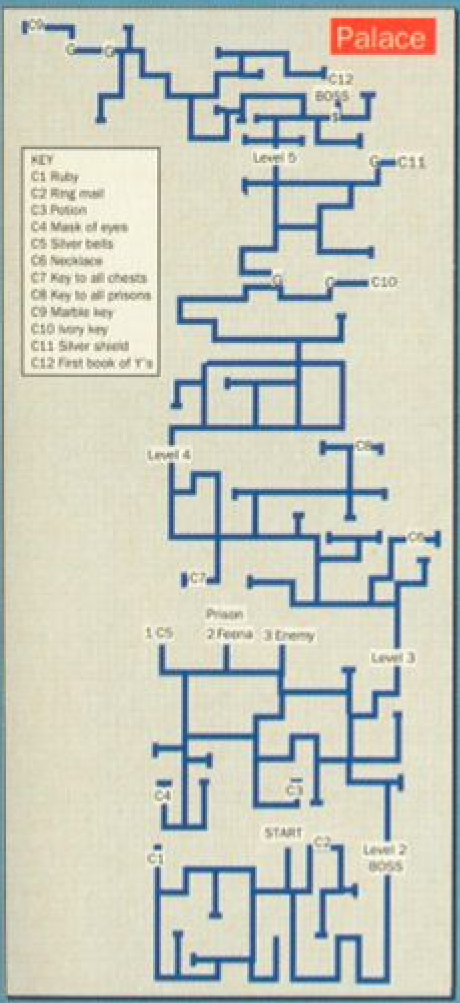
Use the winged key to gain access to the Dragon level. This is aptly named as it is guarded by only one dragon, which is the most resilientmonster you will have encountered.

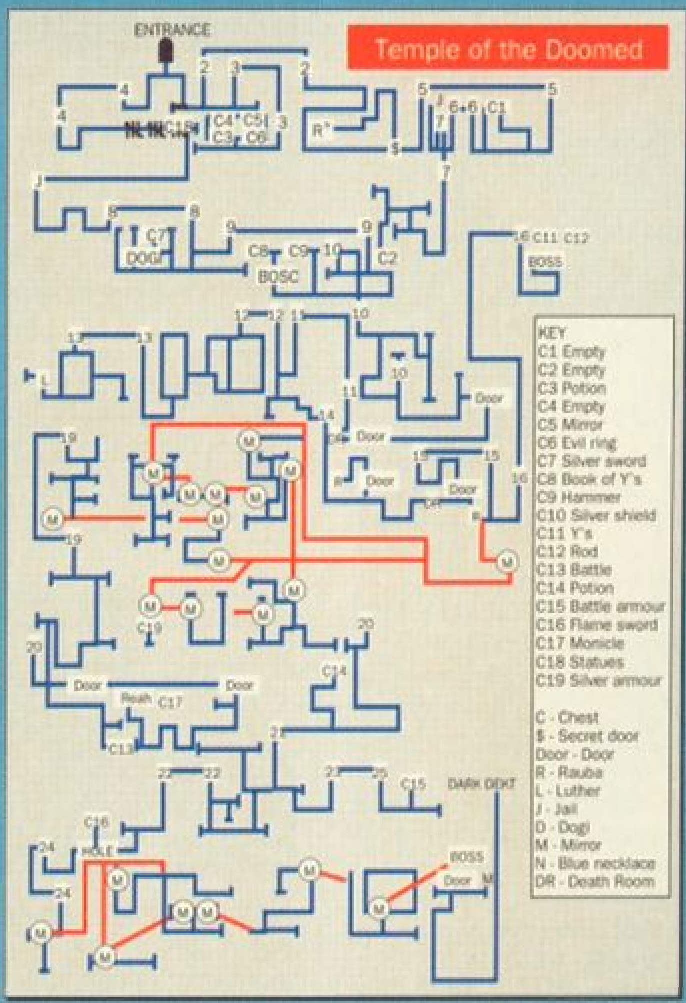
Travel along the corridor until you find a lever on the wall – this

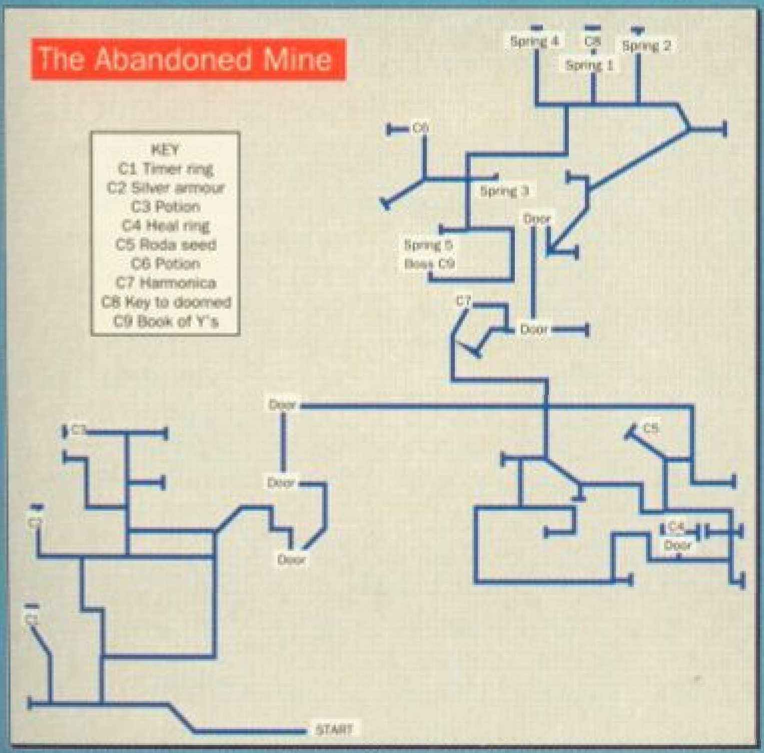


This month's Console Corner is a complete guide to *Y's* on the Sega Master System from two names that should be familiar to *ACE* readers, Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook of Cardiff and Caerphilly respectively.

1. Buy sapphire ring from market trader.
2. Take it to Donis in Ohman's bar, he'll give you 1500 G.
3. Buy short sword and small shield, arm yourself.
4. Go out of Minea, cross the bridge and in the field you are in, to the east, there lies a spring.
5. On the east side of this spring there is a small shelf where you can almost stand in the water. Here is found the pedestal.
6. Go back to Minea and sell pedestal to market trader. He'll give you 2000 G.
7. Buy chainmail armour. Wear it.
8. Go to Sara. She'll give you a crystal, you'll go up a level.
9. In a palace, open the first chest, take the ruby.
10. Go back to Minea and sell it to market trader for 1200 G.
11. Buy a long sword and go outside Minea. Kill villains until you reach level 9.
12. Go back to Minea and buy middle shield and platemail armour.
13. Fight first palace boss.
14. Go to level 3 and pick up the key to all chests.
15. Explore and open every chest.
16. Go to the mine. Open every chest.
17. Fight level 5 boss in the palace. You find his lair by wearing the mask.
18. Take book back to seer's house. her friend will give you another book.
19. Wander around, killing villains and accumulating enough experience points to enable you to reach level 10.
20. If you haven't already done so, rescue FEENA from prison 2 on level 2 of palace.
21. Go to boss in mine. Kill him and you will receive the third book of Y's.
22. Get back out to Minea. Give harmonica to REAH.
23. Buy all remaining weapons from shops, sell necklace to market trader. He gives you 500 G.
24. Go to Rhoda in the second field and walk down into her trunk. Follow instructions, and her brother tree is situated to the south-west of her. You should now have the silver sword.
25. Take silver bells back to the mayor in Zepick. He will give you a power ring.
26. Go to the Jeba. Feena will be there. Let Jeba read all the books.
27. Make your way to the thieves den. When outside, check you have the following:-
    (i) All 4 swords;
    (ii) All 4 shields;
    (iii) All 4 armour;
    (iv) Mask, potion;
    (v) Power ring, ring mail, timer ring, heal ring;
    (vi) 3 Y's books;
    (vii) Crystal;
    Other items include wings, mirror and roda seed.
28. In thieves den you will be taken to the tower.
29. Once in tower, journey to level 3. From the three empty chests take only the evil ring and the mirror, NOT THE POTION!
30. Go to jail after level 6. To get out, do this: To the right of the jail door there are 2 stones which are exactly the same as the others in the bottom row. Go down to the middle of the screen and then walk up into the two stones. A hole will open.
31. Speak to Luther. Speak to Dogi. Collect the statues.


Palace
KEY
C1 Ruby
C2 Ring mail
C3 Potion
C4 Mask of eyes
C5 Silver bells
C6 Necklace
C7 Key to all chests
C8 Key to all prisons
C9 Marble key
C10 Ivory key
C11 Silver shield
C12 First book of Y's
BOSS
Level 5
Level 4
Prison
1 C5
2 Feena
3 Enemy
Level 3
START
Level 2
BOSS


ENTRANCE
Temple of the Doomed
KEY
C1 Empty
C2 Empty
C3 Potion
C4 Empty
C5 Mirror
C6 Evil ring
C7 Silver sword
C8 Book of Y's
C9 Hammer
C10 Silver shield
C11 Y's
C12 Rod
C13 Battle
C14 Potion
C15 Battle armour
C16 Flame sword
C17 Monicle
C18 Statues
C19 Silver armour
C - Chest
$ - Secret door
Door - Door
R - Rauba
L - Luther
J - Jail
D - Dogi
M - Mirror
N - Blue necklace
DR - Death Room
BOSS
DOGI
BOSC
Reah
HOLE
DARK DEKT


The Abandoned Mine
KEY
C1 Timer ring
C2 Silver armour
C3 Potion
C4 Heal ring
C5 Roda seed
C6 Potion
C7 Harmonica
C8 Key to doomed
C9 Book of Y's
Spring 4
Spring 1
Spring 2
Spring 3
Spring 5
Boss C9
Door
START

32. Go back to floor two and wear your mask in the statue corridor. Go through the secret door and speak to Rauba. He'll give you the blue necklace.

33. Go back to jail but wear blue necklace on entering.

34. Go to floor 8 and get your silver sword from the chest. Also see Dogi.

35. Go to floor 9, kill boss. Take book and hammer.

36. Go to floor 10, open chest, collect armour.

37. Go to floor 13, see Luther. Go to floor 14, see Rauba.

38. Rauba is in a death room. Run through this room and go through first door. Visit him. He'll take your energy back up. Get your potion ready and run on through the corridor to the right. As soon as your energy is almost zero, use your potion. Carry on and go through the door.

39. Go to floor 16, defeat boss and collect the fifth book of Y's. You should also take the rod. Follow mirror solution shown on map, starting on floor 15.

40. Go to floor 19. Collect shield and rescue Reah. You must be wearing the evil ring and the blue necklace to enter her room. She gives you the monocle. With this it is possible to read all the books.

41. Go to floor 20 and get the potion. Never use it until instructed.

42. Go to floor 22 and walk up corridor. A hole will appear in the wall. Enter hole, collect flame sword.

43. Go to floor 24 and defeat boss. Go through the mirror.

44. Go to floor 14 and prepare to walk through death room again. Prepare your potion and follow the aforementioned routine, only in reverse.

45. When out, go to floor 13 and see Luther again. He will give you a medallion enabling you to enter Dark Dekt's domain.

46. Go to floor 3 and open the chest containing the potion.

47. Go to floor 14, go through deathroom (using routine).

48. Go to floor 24, use second mirror solution and go to Dark Dekt's door...

49. Use all silver weapons, power ring and hammer to defeat Dark Dekt.

General Hints

1. Enter tower with a potion, use potions only on floor 14.

2. You can reenergise on tower battlements.

3. Wear blue necklace when entering jail and opening chests.

4. Make sure you've bought all weapons, as silver weapons are stolen from you when in jail.

5. The raspberry creatures at the beginning of the old mine give 200 experience points and 200 gold. They can be killed on level 7.

MINEA

Market trader
will sell you:-

1. A mirror for 1,000g
2. A pair of wings for 2,000g
3. Sapphire ring for 1,000g
4. Silver armour has been sold.

You can sell him:-

1. A gold pedestal for 2,000g
2. A ruby ring for 1,200g
3. A necklace for 500g

Seer's house

1. After arming yourself up, she will give you a crystal.
2. When you have the first book of Y's, go to see her and she will give you the second book

Kraze hospital

1. Can buy a potion for 1,000g
2. Can delete data
3. Can heal some energy for 50g

Ohman's bar

1. If you give the sapphire ring he will reward you with 1,500g
2. Ohman talks about thieves
3. The muscular man will tel you he hunts thieves

Sword Smith
Can sell you:-

1. Short sword for 500g
2. Long sword for 2,000g
3. Tarwarl sword for 5,000g

Armour and shieldsmith
Can sell you:-

1. Small shield for 400g
2. Medium shield for 2,000g
3. Large shield for 5,000g
4. Small armour for 700g
5. Middle armour for 2,000g
6. Reflex armour for 6,000g

CONSOLE CORNER

opens a panel to the main room where you will find the dragon, so be careful!

Just as you enter the room you will find a pile of ashes under which is the square key. Carefully move to the left of the room where you will find a door to open with the key. Near the door are scattered a number of items, one of which (the eye of time) could prove extremely useful. Pass through the door. In front of you is the power gem, encased in a field which must be broken. Use a ZO KATH RA spell to get the gem. When the gem is free, hold the firestaff up and click the mouse to join the two. You now have the most powerful weapon to be found within the dungeon.

The door on your left is opened by placing a silver coin in the slot provided – there is a coin on the floor to the left of the door. This room only contains an alter of rebirth but is very useful for evading the dragon.

You will find that the staircase you entered down is now closed. You must go to the staircase at the opposite end of the dragon room, this will take you up to level 13.

Level 13

Items to be found: The Hellion, Flamitt.

You are now nearing the end of your quest. You must get rid of the demons first. The passage you walk along cannot be entered by any creatures, including Lord Chaos. You can use magic at range. The fire elementals can be done away with by repeated fusing with the Firestaff.

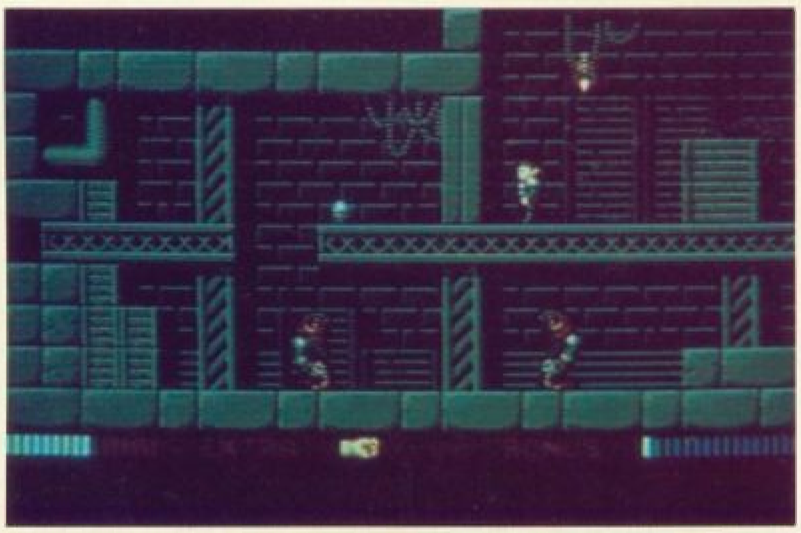
The best place to take on Lord Chaos is in the room on the far left.

If you succeed you will be rewarded with an impressive show.

GOOD LUCK!

Well, that just about wraps it up. I'm sure that many people's interest in the game will have been revived by Les's excellent guide. If you are among them, have fun!

Les has also promised us a complete guide to *Chaos Strikes Back*, which he is currently working on. Look out for the ultimate in Chaotic help in these pages soon.



CARTOON CAPERS

Fancy seeing all of the animation in *Space Ace* in one go? No problem with this little number from **Omer Barak** of **Michmoret, Israel**.

Start playing the game and pause it, then type 'DODEMODEXTER'. Now continue the game and sit back and watch.

THE EVEN MORE ULTIMATE DUNGEON MASTER (AND CHAOS) GUIDE

'Why does everybody go "EEEK!"', says **Luga** of **Llandudno**, "when they find an item of (cursed) armour. Kit out your characters in this stuff and the knights give you little or no damage, the worms are a pushover, and the rock monsters lose their teeth! (Why do you think the knights have such a good armour class)?'

SWITCHBLADE SWIZZLE

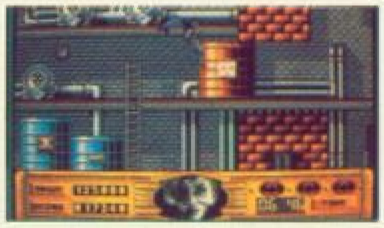
Once the word SWITCHBLADE has assembled on the title screen do the following:

There are five levels. Select the level you want to start on, hold down the level number as well as the fire button until you appear on the level you selected. If it fails press escape and try again.

Brett Davis, Cambridge.

BATMAN THE MOVIE – AMSTRAD CPC

If you want to skip level, all you have to do is this: During the game press the following all at the same time – DE290 – and voila!



Amit Parmar, Stanmore, Middlesex

BATTLE SQUADRON

While playing, type in CASTOR and you won't get touched. Now press F1 to F10 to get your weapons together.

Matthew Iles, Bristol.

NEWS FOR NINJA NUTTERS

Those nice people at The Sales Curve have sent us a few choice phrases to give *Ninja Warriors* players some light-hearted moments.

9900
GAME OVER
292

AMIGA – Put CAPS LOCK on then type the cheat phrase you require, then turn off CAPS LOCK.

THE TERMINATOR – Ninja body parts explode when you die.

MONTY PYTHON – Enemies come on backwards.

SKIPPY – Enemies bounce.

A SMALL STEP FOR A MAN – Moon gravity. Jumping baddies will jump right off the top of the screen.

STEVE AUSTIN – Pressing S during play will toggle slow motion on and off.

ST - Hold down the ALTERNATE key while you type the following:

CASABLANCA – Black and White screen.

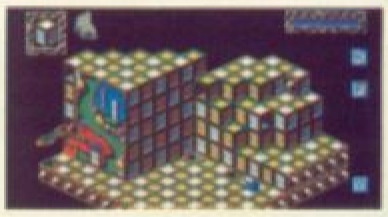
GENESIS OF THE DALEKS – Negative screen mode.

THE TERMINATOR, MONTY PYTHON, SKIPPY, and *A SMALL-STEP FOR A MAN* (with no space between SMALL and STEP) – All as above.

EAT TO THE BEAT – Pressing Q during play will toggle slow motion on and off.

NEVER MIND THE PASSWORDS

Stuck on a level in *Never Mind*? Well don't worry, **Neil A. Matthew** of **Loughborough, Leicestershire** can sort you out.



The passwords are six letter long, but the middle two are the ones that vary the most. The passwords take one of the forms:

GZ..ZF, IZ..LK, RZ..BC, MZ..MM, AZ..HV, HZ..PI, VZ..IN, PZ..WL

depending on the level number.

Divide the level number by 8 *and take the remainder* (0 *to* 7). Then the password is GF..ZF to PZ..WL where the missing two letters are filled in as below. I don't think it actually matters which group of four letters you use as a password, it still starts the game at the right level as long as the password has one of the above forms.

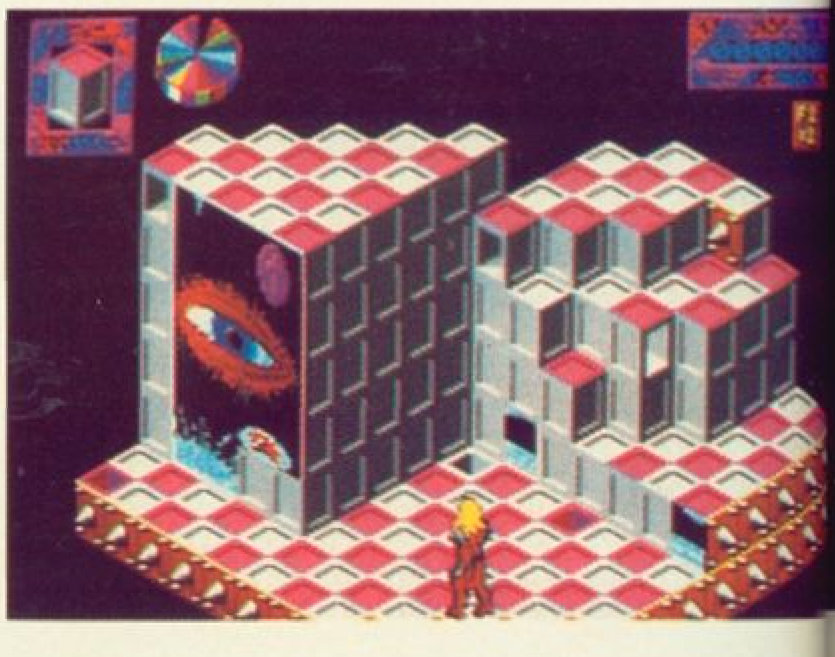
The middle letters are based on the level number divided by 16 and the remainder. The numbers you get are encoded as follows:

0:M 1:A 2:H 3:V 4:P 5:G 6:I 7:R 8:W 9:N 10:Z 11:T 12:L 13:Q 14:B 15:F

The fourth letter of the password is the letter corresponding to the level number divided by 16 and the third letter is the remainder.

So, for level 18, remainder divided by 8 is 2, so password is RZ..BC, and dividing by 16 gives 1 remainder 2 so the middle letters are HA, and the password is RZHABC.

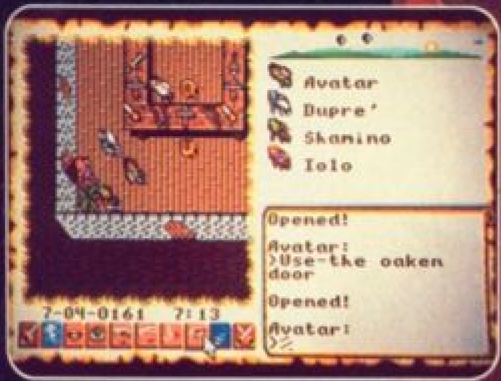
There are 255 levels in total.



Ultima VI

The False Prophet

In a cataclysm of sound and light, a bolt of searing blue fire strikes the earth!



- Avatar
- Dupre'
- Shamino
- Iolo

Opened!

Avatar:
>Use-the oaken door

Opened!

Avatar:
>

7-04-0161 7:13

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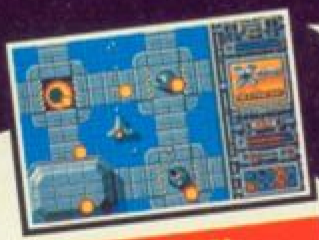
BRILLIANT AND AMAZING

DOUBLE DRAGON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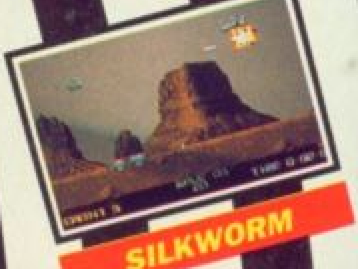
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Virgin Games

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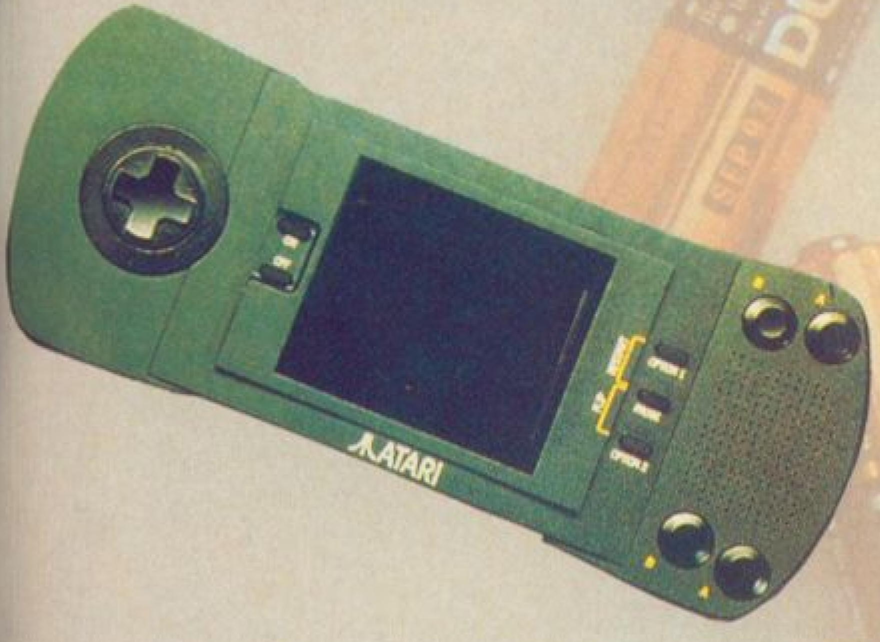
A Day in the Life...



ACE recently received an anonymous manuscript in the post. We believe it to be a bold testament on behalf of today's youth. It deserves to be read by all who care deeply about the future of the younger generation...

6:17 – Good grief I hate Monday. It's past nine and I'm taking the dog to Chippersfield to have it put down for rabies.

06:18 – Phew. . . It's OK, just another nightmare.

10:13 – "Adrian, Adriaaan!" Wassat? Who? Hey, take it easy Ma – and go steady on the shaking. Give me a break will you, it is Saturday after all.

10:35 – Kippers for breakfast. Gave them to dog. Dog gave them back. Wish he hadn't swallowed them first...

10.45 Time for homework. Where did I put the Lynx? The smaller these things get, the easier they are to lose. Ah here it is (in dog basket) – switch it on and...'Please Insert Game' Ah-ha, sabotaged by Dad methinks! Maybe if I offer to wash the Sierra he'll give me the card back. Technology powerful enough to store 8Mb of programs and data and they still haven't invented a way to stop unauthorised use by pets and parents. It got Mum last Thursday though: when she tried to remove the Blue Lightning card she broke a fingernail in the attempt; served her right too.

10.55 Decide on subject for weekend essay: Lynx Cartridge Design (Amendments to). Hang some 360s in California Games' Surfing first just to put me in the mood.

11.08 Discuss essay with dog. Atari could have made the cards easier to get out in the first place – a removal tool or a small tag would have been a good idea. The worst part is the trapdoor on the side – that plastic hinge looks a bit fragile to me; and I shudder to think what might happen if I pulled a card out while the machine was still on. The dog agrees.

11:47 – Decide more research is necessary for essay. Sit back in armchair, plug Walkman's headphone jack into Lynx, put ear-plugs on dog, settle down to spot of surfin' USA. Dog helps out by running up huge score in FootBag, a rather weird scenario in which you have to keep the ball in the air for as long as possible. For some reason, this seems to appeal to the dog – who is left-handed by the way, but no problem due to Lynx's built-in screen flip.

1.47 Nip round to shop and get new set of batteries. Yup – they only last around 2 hours per set – six Duracells is a lot of money for a kid, let alone a dog.

2.15 – Meditate on possible alternative themes for essay. California Games (supplied free with the Lynx) is really four games in one – a stripped down version of the original computer version. This is surprising, considering how much room is available on the cards. Could this be a possible topic? The dog sleeps while I check out BMX. Will definitely get down to homework later.

BMX is more fun and a lot less effort than the real thing. I wake up the dog. After two hours playing against it, its paw snaps off due to repetitive strain injury. The dog does not appear to notice. I break off the other paw so that it won't notice the difference.

This gives me a strong advantage in the curious skateboard game Half Pipe. As before, points are scored by successfully performing a series of dangerous stunts. Timing is all important in Half Pipe – misjudge a flip at your peril. Ah yes...the homework. Later.

3:35 – Before the batteries give in again I'll get a quick game of Blue Lightning. Remember After Burner? This is the same idea, but it looks much better on the Lynx; each mission is coded though, so you can start where you left off. Problem is, the tiny graphics make targets a trifle difficult to spot. Definitely another essay topic there.

4.35 – "Whizz, bang, phut!" Well, there goes another set of batteries – but they lasted a little longer this time. Decide to take advance on next year's pocket money and buy a mains adaptor, but discover Dad had one all the time locked away in his desk. Maybe I could scrape together enough for a copy of Gates Of Zendocon (a Salamander-like clone) too. That's one title I haven't got – but with imports currently costing up to £40 each are you surprised?

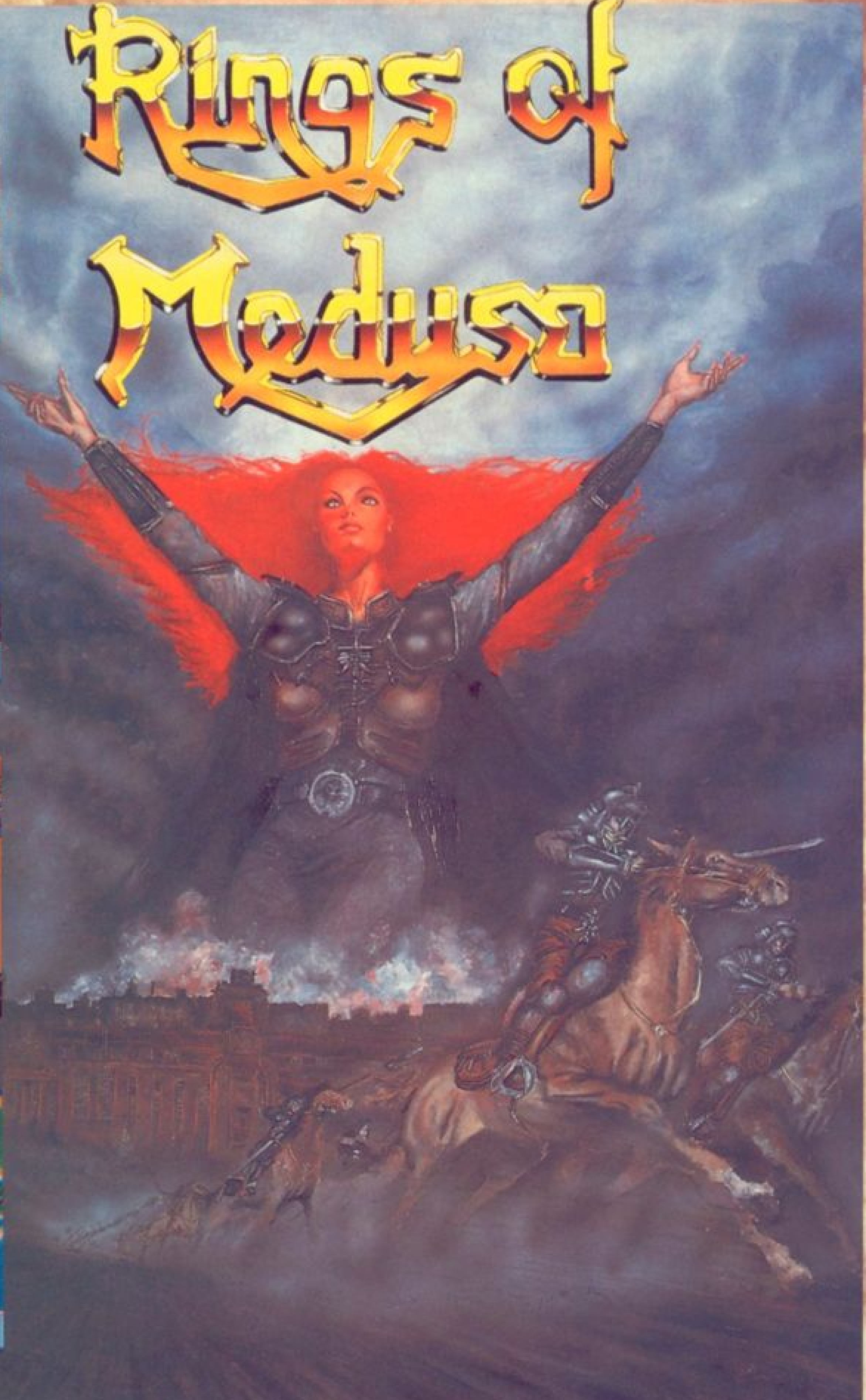
5.15 Dad comes in from garden and sees dog. Lynx sold to pay vet's bills. Ah well...back to the Archimedes – or perhaps I'll write my essay on the FM Towns. Isn't life a bore?

A PS was attached to the note. It reads: ***Thanks to CHIPS of Middlesbrough (0624 482831) for the loan of the Lynx.***

What a nightmare: four lynxs in the house and mum, dad, and my baby sis are using them. aagghh!

THE RINGS OF MEDUSA

THE RINGS OF MEDUSA


Rings of Medusa

" an excellent game which has used living in its world rather than simply playing in it"
ACE April 1990 Issue

Starbyte

" Rings of Medusa is a captivating strategy game. Overcome the Goddess Medusa and her evil powers and save your Fathre's Kingdom with your skill, cunning and adventuring. A unique voyage in time and discovery as you hunt down the five hidden rings - find them and prepare to encounter Medusa"

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ACE NEW WORLDS

PAT WINSTANLEY CHECKS OUT THE LATEST FANTASY RELEASES

FREE ADVENTURERS APPLY HERE!

The computer game industry is a funny thing. At one end of the spectrum we have giants marketing games like *Champions of Krynn, Ultima, Hitch Hikers Guide* etc together with their requisite glossy colour boxes brim-full of goodies. At the other are enthusiastic programmers coding their spare hours away simply for the love of it.

The latest imports from the U.S. can cost £50 each while a PD library will charge that for 20 disks crammed with programs, some of them of a better standard than the offerings from the 'big boys'. If two games are equally playable, how should 'value for money' affect the overall score of the game?

Many of the games I receive for review from the giants are pre-release copies, essentially complete but without the fancy packaging – perhaps just a few roughly photocopied sheets of instructions (if any). Thus assessment is made regardless of the accessories which give the games shelf-appeal.

Similarly, most of the games I buy are purchased by mail order (yes, even reviewers actually shell out hard earned cash for their own personal copies). In effect the fancy boxes are wasted. How many adventure/fantasy games are stocked by YOUR local software outlet?

Today I played a classical text adventure which had me instantly hooked, grimacing and giggling, exploring for hours and tearing my hair at the puzzles. I also played another which frustrated me instantly and continued to do so for hours with little light relief or feelings of accomplishment.

Neither had much in the way of physical documentation yet one cost around ten times as much as the other (the cheaper one being the better offering). Perhaps I'm naive...but I don't understand why there is such a difference in price/pleasure!

CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN

A Dragonlance 'role playing epic' from SSI/US GOLD

The Dragonlance AD&D game world has already been computerised with *Heroes of the Lance* and more recently *Dragons of Flame* so what's new about this game? The main difference is that role playing elements are at the heart of *Champions of Krynn* with arcade considerations pushed out to the sidelines – good news for people like me who prefer to think and plan rather than live by reflex alone.

Champions of Krynn is set just after the War of the Lance. Although the forces of evil have been shattered and dispersed and the forces of good have returned to their homes, outpost still need to be manned to guard against the pockets of evil which remain. Your goal is to assemble a party of adventurers to serve in the border outposts.

Your first task is to create characters for the party. These can be any of seven races, each of which has useful characteristics. Thus hill dwarves are especially resistant to magic and adept at dodging ogres and giants while the kender have the ability to taunt intelligent opponents sending them into a mindless rage.

Ability scores such as strength, dexterity and charisma are then randomly generated for the character. These scores can be modified if required to allow you to match your computerised character to one more to your liking – a great opportunity to cheat!

Character class and alignment are next. Class can be anything from fighter to mage, priest or ranger. Some races such as half elves can mix classes such as cleric/fighter/mage allowing greater flexibility with the disadvantage of slower advancement of levels.

Once your party is assembled you are sent on a mission, to rid the town of Throtl of evil forces and thing soon start becoming hectic as the town is crawling with monsters and enemy soldiers. Combat takes place on a pseudo 3D screen with each member of your party and the enemy characters shown in position.

If you feel lazy you can simply switch combat to auto so that the computer takes care of the fight for you. This is very useful initially to see what different commands do and which tactics give the best chance of survival. As spell casting becomes more important the auto facility loses some of its charm and manual combat becomes the order of the day.

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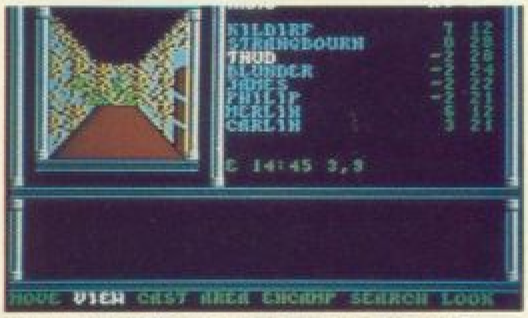
PC	£29.99dk	OUT NOW



Champions of Krynn – the latest in the AD&D series from TSR/SSI

If a hit is made the recipient of the blow or spell loses hit points. A character whose hit points reach zero is unconscious and out of the fight. He might also be dying in which case another party member must use one of his combat turns to bandage the victim and save his life.

After winning a fight there is usually loot to be shared out. Sometimes this consists of large quantities of weapons and armour which, if you can be bothered to collect it, can be taken back to the nearest outpost and sold. Many items such as broadswords and shields are worthless on the second hand market but mail generally fetches good prices so careful selection is needed.

Camping after a battle gives the party a chance to rest up and heal wounds, memorise spells and generally seeing to the welfare of your party marching order, game speed etc. It's also a good time to save.

When you have accumulated sufficient experience points it is time to head for the training hall where characters can rise in

LANDSCAPE 90
Beautifully detailed graphics and a large playing area enhance the atmosphere of the game.

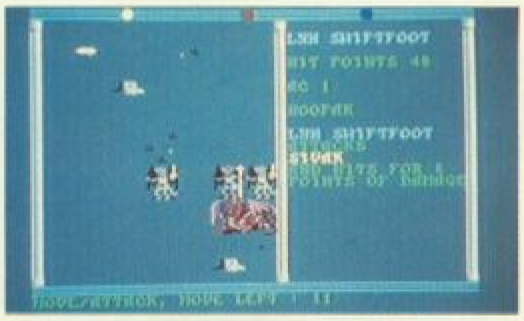
ENCOUNTERS..75
Except during battle between matched armies there is little for the player to try out.

CHALLENGE..90
The game world is complex, has great depths and is well thought out. If you want a game to tax your intellect, intuition and memory simultaneously, ... this is it.

SYSTEM 85
The mouse control could have been rather more precise and loading of the Amiga version more reliable.

ACE RATING
850

An excellent game which has you living in its world rather than simply playing in it.



Combat! Melee can get fairly intense at times in this module

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ATARI ST	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
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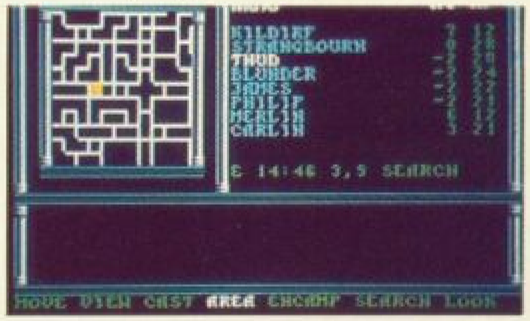
PC	£29.99dk	OUT NOW

levels, improving hit point limits and acquiring the capacity to memorise more and better spells.

Spell casting seems horrendously complex at first but simplifies greatly after a little practice. Spells can be cast by mages, clerics and high level knights and can exist in one of four forms, the character's memory, in a grimoire, on a scroll or in a wand. Almost sixty spells are available to high level characters although less spells can be memorised at a time so careful selection is required.

Clerics generally cast healing and protective spells while mages have access to a wide variety including stinking cloud, ice cloud and shocking grasp. Red and white robed mages can both cast many of the spells but each also has their own exclusive range reflecting their alignment. Red spells tend to be more aggressive while white spells are more passive.

All this merely scratches the surface of the game. For newcomers to the world of Krynn and the AD&D scene generally the game can be played on a fairly simple level similar to many other RPGs, but for the player who demands plenty of depth and accurate attention to detail *Champions of Krynn* will prove irresistible and totally addictive. The difficulty level allows steady progression through the game with new powers and monsters to be discovered at every turn.



Various options are easily accessible at each stage of the game, using either keyboard or joystick

LANDSCAPE 60
The graphics are fairly bland with little variation in scenery and minimal animation but the playing area is large with lots of exploring to do.

ENCOUNTERS..80
Plenty of NPCs to find and attach to the party. .... Information is by means of tavern tales and entries in the adventurer's journal.

CHALLENGE..90
A well balanced RPG with plenty of strategic ......ele- ments to keep the interest going.

SYSTEM 80
You can't load a saved game until the whole party is dead but otherwise well designed and easy to use.

ACE RATING
820

Definitely a must for any adventurer into RPGs and especially for Dragonlance fans.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Traditional fare in grand style from JIM MACBRAYNE

"Mortals are by their very nature worthless, serving merely as playthings for our amusement." So says Zeus to Hermes over a game of chess. Hermes begs to differ so Zeus makes a bargain, If Hermes can find a human to recover the Golden Fleece, Zeus will retract his words..... guess who the human is!

Now I must admit that even after hours of play I haven't a clue where or what the golden fleece is. However I've just been taken on a trip of nostalgia brought right up to date.

The start location produces a lamp. the next a sword and a few moves further sees you furnished with a rope. I haven't yet found any use for these items but I'm not about to let them go as I'm sure they'll come in handy somewhere!

If you've ever played *Colossal Cave/ Adventure* you'll be right at home with this game. So far the location count includes around 100 rooms, several (still) locked doors, one random puzzle solved (for which it was necessary to resort to a short programming session for the answer – thank you STOS!), several puzzles still to be puzzled and at least one maze as yet un-mapped. And that's just from wandering about to get the feel of the thing!

Progressing through the game brings you into contact with a gingerbread house (yes, you can eat it), a goblin who provides you with half a screen of dying words in his own language, a room which drops a 100 ton weight on you, Tom & Jerry style, if you don't fill a receptacle correctly and hit five buttons in the correct order and a fire which doesn't burn you (at first) to mention just a few of the features.

The parser can handle virtually everything you throw at it and the text descriptions simply drip with atmosphere. Even getting lost in the sewer pipe system is an experience as pipes narrow and branch or send you shooting inexorably down one way chutes.

Jim MacBrayne has produced an adventure of Infocom/Level 9 proportions which will delight any seasoned solver. And the best of it is that the game is shareware. Thus it costs the enormous price of £0.00 if you send a disk and return postage to the author or £2.50 all-in from 17 Bit Software. (See panel for addresses.)

Shareware is distributed freely on the understanding that if you like the program having experienced it you will voluntarily send the author a 'donation', in this case £5 is suggested. I'd suggest it to be at least three or four times that figure in exchange for the pleasure this game will provide.

LANDSCAPE 90
Atmospheric, confusing, classical, novel and .... entertaining

ENCOUNTERS..50
Little interaction with NPCs, but the imp is amusing if you manage to answer his brain-teaser correctly.

CHALLENGE..80
Not a game for rank beginners.... definitely for the connoisseur.

SYSTEM 75
80 column text only – fine with a monitor but what about playing on a TV screen?

ACE RATING
835

Nostalgia, atmosphere, novelty, graphic-free, inexpensive .... what more can I say?

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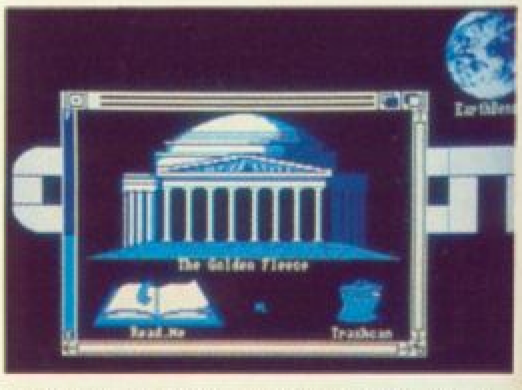
AMIGA	£2.50dk	OUT NOW

Contact 17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wake' field, WF1 1XX or Jim Macbrayne, 27 Paid' myre Crescent, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5AQ



No pics in this game – it's text only. The loading icon is the closest you'll get to illustration!

DUNGEON QUEST

GAINSTAR put adventure games back by several centuries

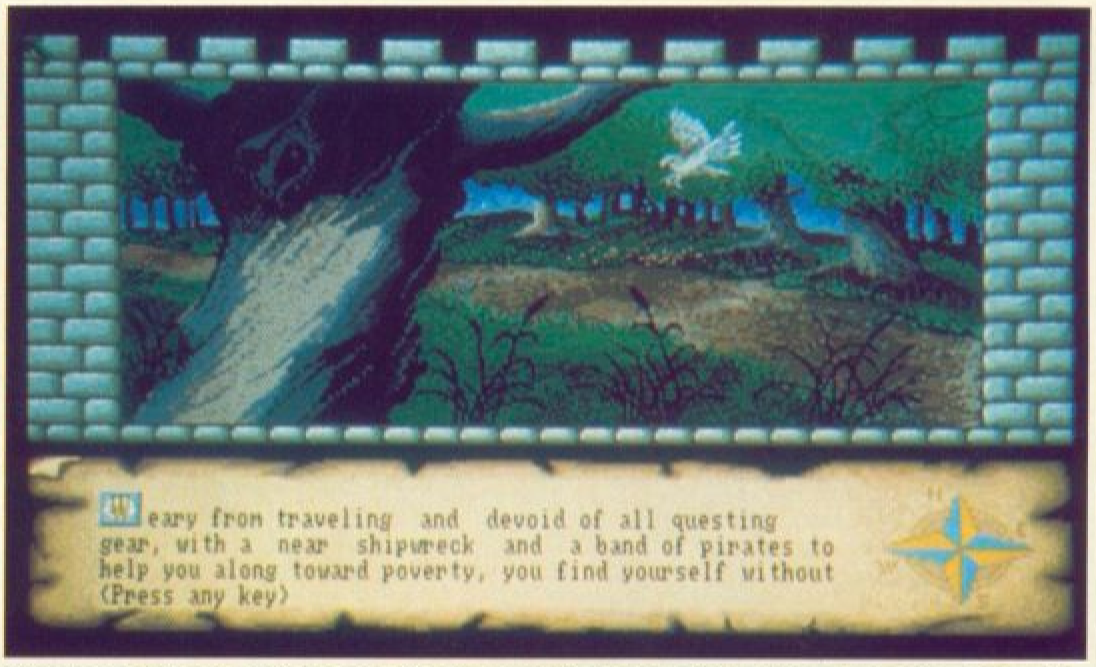
Last month I commented on how larger memory machines were encouraging increased use of graphics and sound effects with little effect on gameplay improvements. *Dungeon Quest* is a perfect example not only of lack of improvement but also regression.

The screen display is divided into two areas, the upper half showing a still graphic of your location (with small animated details such as torches), while the lower half is reserved for text input and response. The program is entirely keyboard driven apart from the option to click on cardinal compass points for movement.

Graphics are excellent, well drawn, colourful and detailed – each location has a different one which must (alas) be loaded from disc every time you move. This makes for incredibly slow play, especially as many locations are mere scenery which must be passed through to reach more interesting areas of the game.

In addition to the excellent graphics, sound has been used to good effect. Atmospheric samples such as birds singing, footsteps in the distance, church bells etc are present at each location. Occasionally the sound can become annoying if much time is spent at a single location trying things out, but on the whole it is balanced and does add to the game.

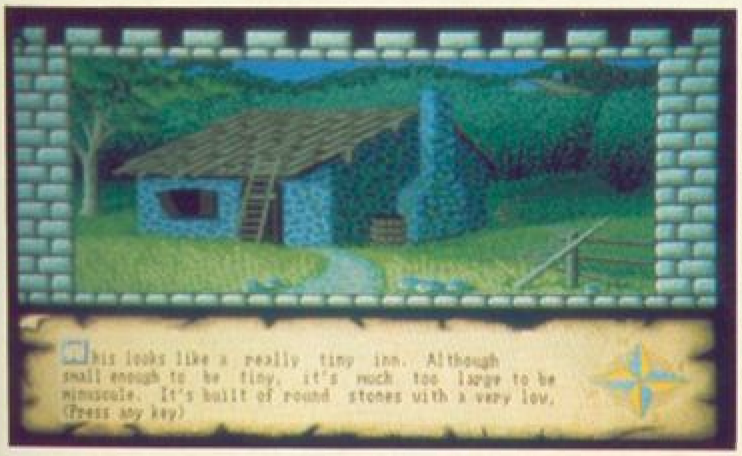
Text is beautifully presented too. The main description of each location is displayed in the style of an illustrated manuscript with a large pictorial first letter. Later visits to the same location simply bring up a brief description. Unfortunately the text window is rather shallow so anything but the simplest message needs to be scrolled up in stages.



```
eary from traveling  and  devoid of all questing
gear, with a  near  shipwreck  and  a band of pirates to
help you along toward poverty, you find yourself without
(Press any key)
```

There's more going on here than meets the eye...sound, that's what. Birds singing, doves cooing – beautiful.

With such a well crafted display I expected great things of the game but my enthusiasm changed to disappointment and frustration as I began to play. The parser is reminiscent of early text only adventures with input virtually restricted to verb/noun and no multiple inputs on the lines of GET SWORD AND GO NORTH. RAMSAVE, OOPS, GOTO and all the other commands we have become used to seeing as standard simply don't exist in this game.



```
his looks like a  really  tiny  inn.  Although
small enough to  be  tiny,  it's  much  too  large to be
minuscule.  It's built of round  stones with a very low.
(Press any key)
```

Yet another beautiful location – if only there was more to do!

Having battled through boring locations I finally reached a section of a castle where the room description tells of a hole in the western wall just big enough to get a hand through. By what magic was my body transformed to hand size so that I could wriggle through the hole? That is just one example among many of inconsistencies which totally ruin any chance of living in the game world. The playtesters missed quite a few spelling mistakes as well.

Struggling with the parser causes its own puzzles. At one point there is a building before you, its door blocked by a ladder leaning against the roof. The picture clearly shows the layout and the description suggests you would have to step down through the doorway to enter. Trouble is, the parser doesn't seem to recognise the existence of many things, the ladder included. I still haven't managed to move, climb, push or carry out any other normal or fantastic action with that ladder. Ignoring it altogether and concentrating on getting through the door produces responses implying that the door isn't here and doesn't exist anyway. So why can I see it?

Another example of the limitations of the parser is a small sack containing DragonNip. All my attempts to open the sack, examine it etc were useless. When I met the creature for whom it was obviously intended I spent ages trying to do the right thing using dozens of word variations. At last I gave up and typed "use sack" .... bingo!

In yet another room I typed "use sword" and was treated to a graphic description of my attempts to open a box. Unfortunately this is the only mention I could find of said box as it doesn't seem to have any other existence.

To call this game a disappointment is perhaps an understatement. It appears to have been written by a graphic artist more as a gallery for his work than anything else. Pretty pictures and sampled sounds with no adventure behind them do not make a game.

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW

Other versions TBA

LANDSCAPE 80
Excellent graphics combined with well chosen sound effects but a limited number of places to go.

ENCOUNTERS..45
Few non-player characters and interaction is severely limited.

CHALLENGE..35
Use each object in turn until you find the solution!

SYSTEM 40
More attention to the parser and stored responses with a little less visual concerns would pay major dividends.

ACE RATING
450

A classic example of gameplay being ignored behind the front-end display.

THE BI

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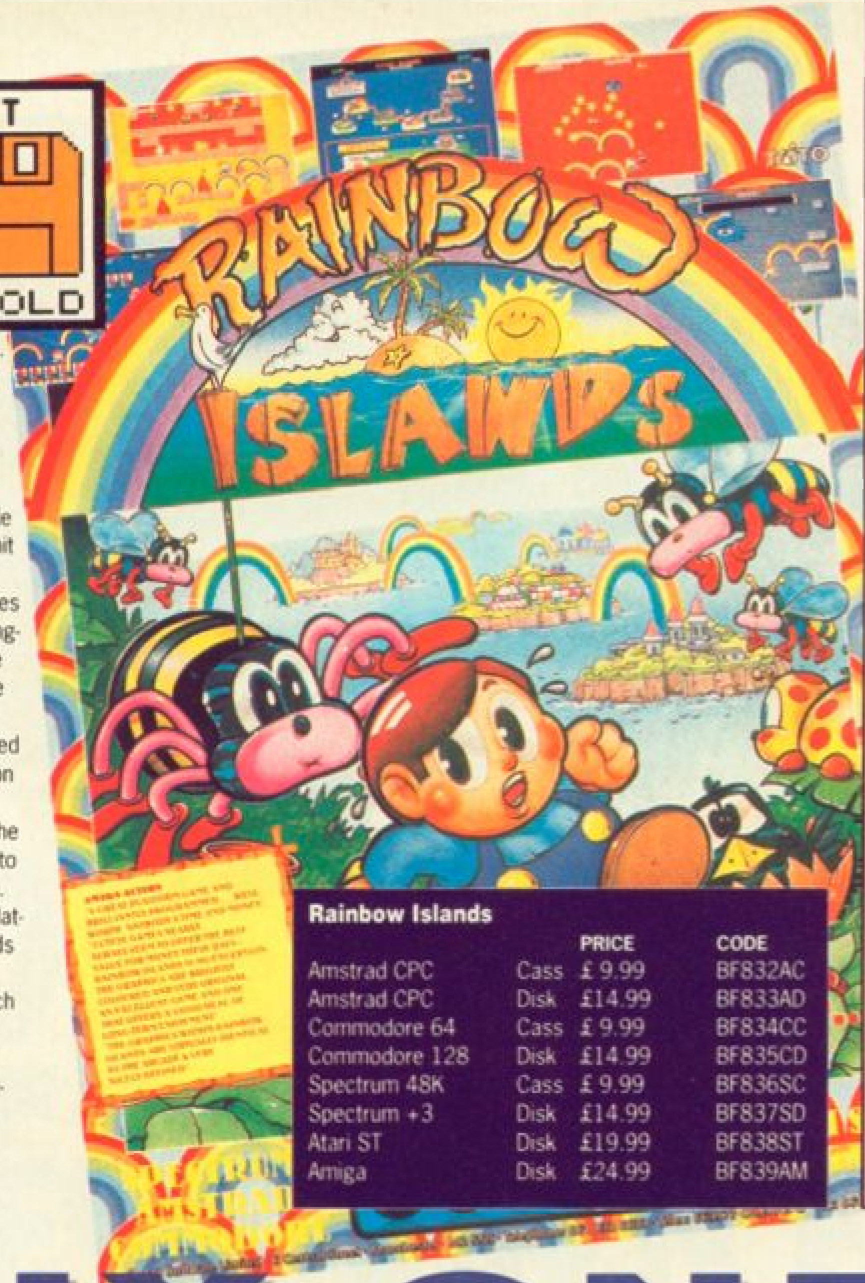
ST FORMAT GOLD



Rainbow Islands
from Ocean

This follow up to Bubble Bobbie looks set to be as much of a hit as Ocean's last cutesy game, New Zealand Story. It combines colourful visuals with frighteningly addictive gameplay, with the result that you end up with one hell of a game.

Graphics have been downloaded from the original arcade version and the moves are just the same. Lead Bub and Bob to the top levels by firing rainbows into the air and then climbing them. When you reach the top of a platform, you can collect thousands of bonus points. There are seven islands to complete, each one more challenging than the last.

"Graftgold's ST Version of Rainbow Islands is one of the best coin-op conversions to have appeared in along time" Maff Evans, ST Format

Rainbow Islands

		PRICE	CODE
Amstrad CPC	Cass	£ 9.99	BF832AC
Amstrad CPC	Disk	£14.99	BF833AD
Commodore 64	Cass	£ 9.99	BF834CC
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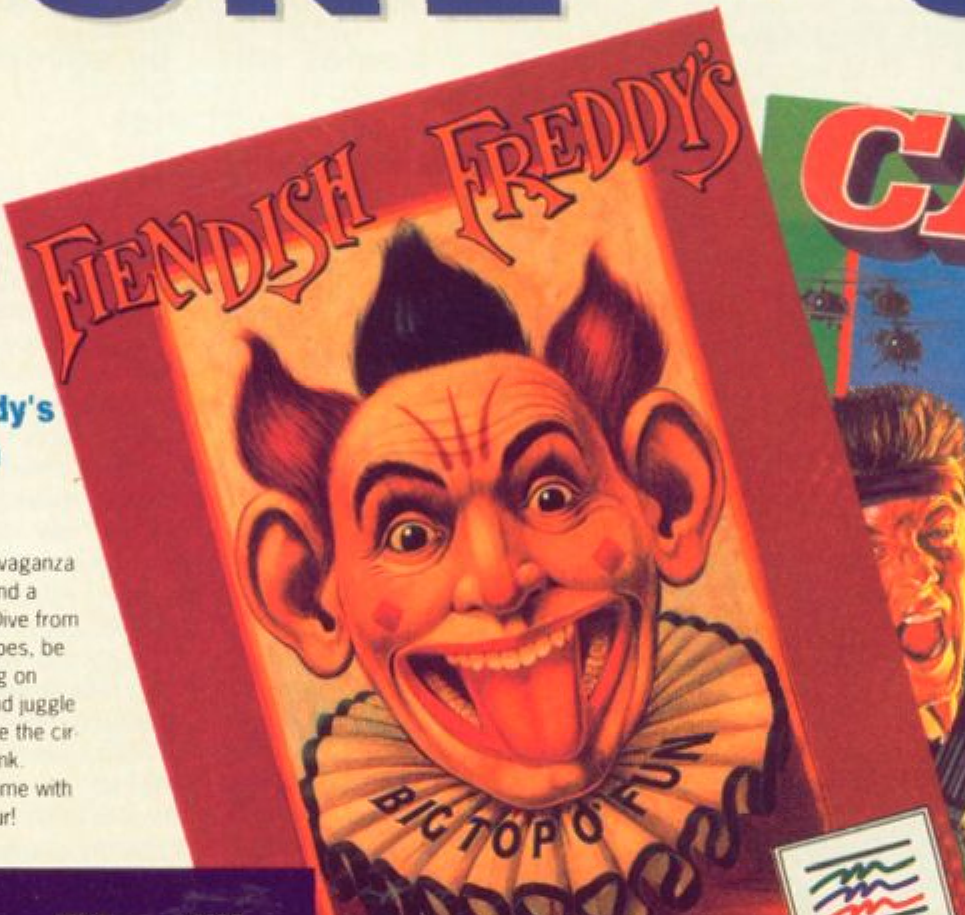
Fiendish Freddy's Big Top of Fun
from Mindscape

Mindscape's circus extravaganza brings you thrills, spills and a whole barrel o' laughs. Dive from high-boards, walk tightropes, be fired from cannons, swing on trapezes, throw knifes and juggle in a desperate bid to save the circus from the big bad bank.

An original multi-event game with a wicked sense of humour!



Fiendish Freddy

		PRICE	CODE
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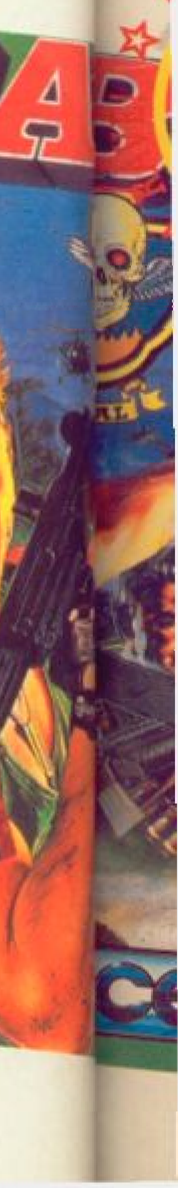

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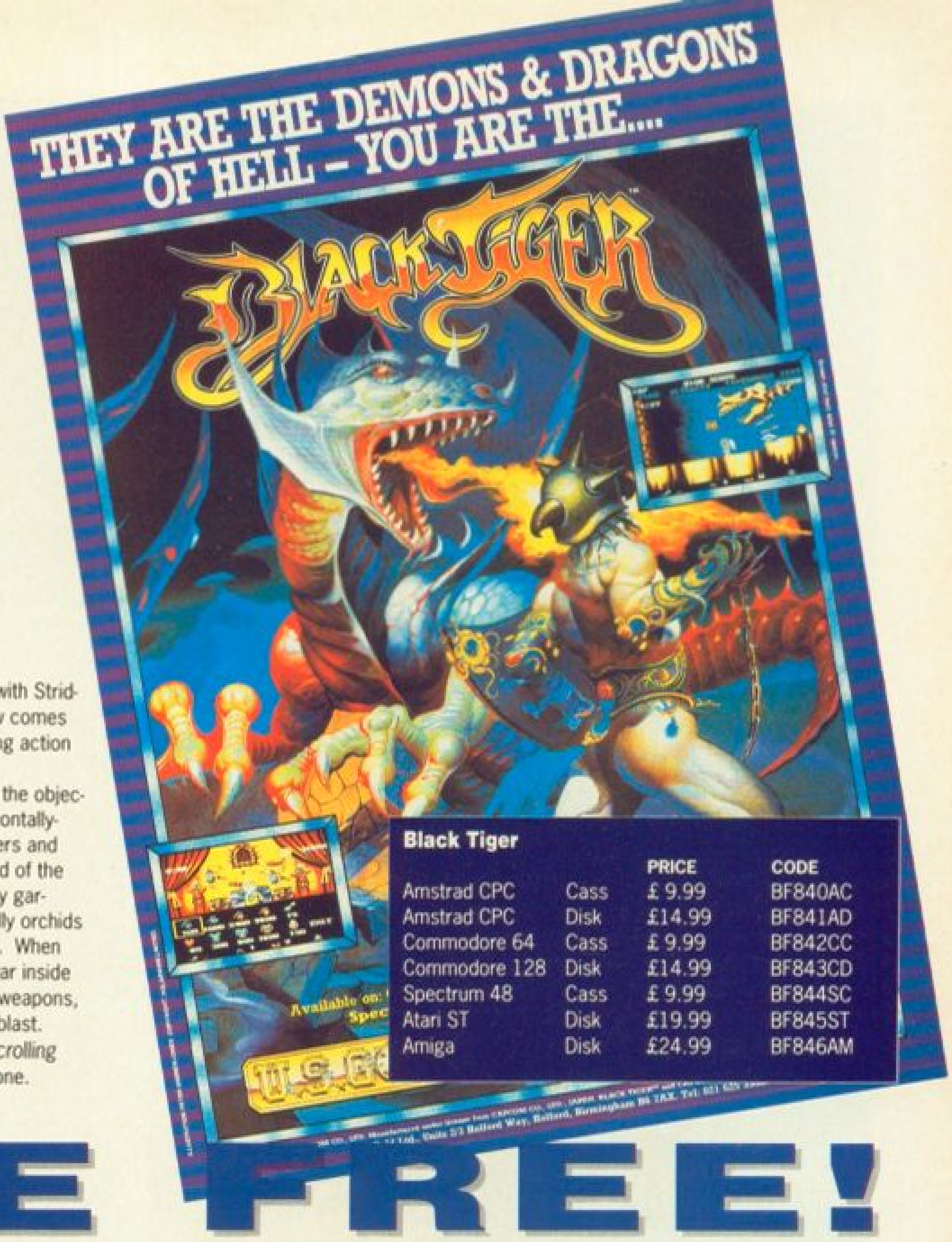
THEY ARE THE DEMONS & DRAGONS OF HELL – YOU ARE THE....
BLACK TIGER
Available on:
U.S. GOLD

Black Tiger
from U S Gold

US Gold have had major hits with Strider and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts. Now comes their latest horizontally-scrolling action game, Black Tiger.

In a similar fashion to Ghouls, the objective is to charge through horizontally-scrolling levels, climbing ladders and following red arrows to the end of the level. Along the way, fight ugly gargoyles, snakes and even deadly orchids using your powerful weaponry. When the going gets tough, disappear inside the shop, pick up some extra weapons, and go out for another merry blast.

If you're a fan of horizontally-scrolling action games, you'll love this one.

Black Tiger

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4

AA RAVE!
AA RAVE!
AA RAVE!
RAVE!

Cabal from Ocean

Go crazy in cartoonland with Cabal. A lone trooper, he's dropped behind enemy lines and must fight his way back home. Level after level must be cleared of buildings and bad guys with machine guns, grenades and bazookas. It looks like Operation Wolf for the under fives but plays like a vet.

Cabal

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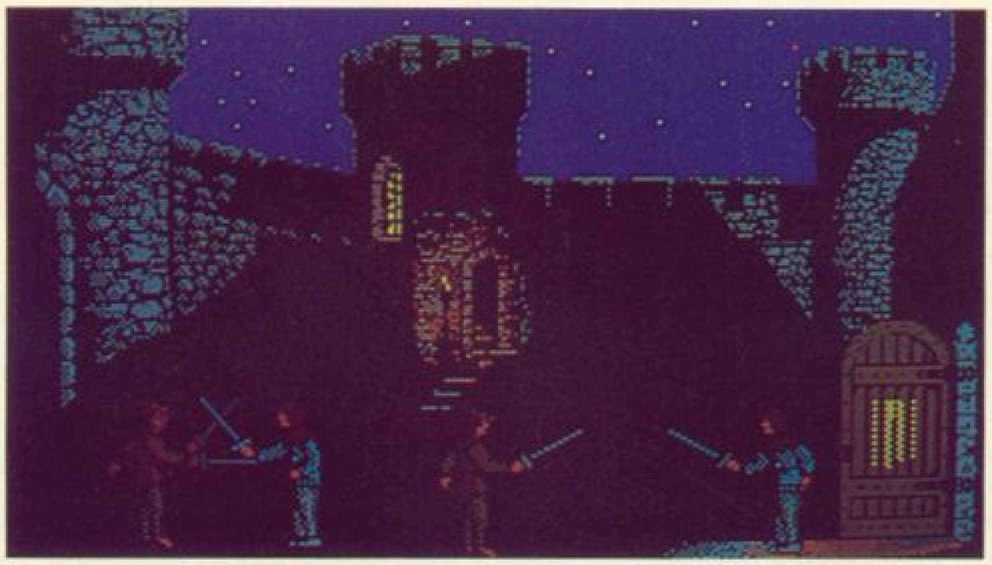


The fruits of the first CD ROM joint venture between Mirrorsoft and Cinemaware – the optical disk version of Defender of the Crown.

Nice One!

Mirrorsoft are set to become Britain's foremost CD-ROM software company. Steve Cooke met up with the boys in the South of France and found out why...

New technology, CD games, and Digital Video Interactive-wotsits – you name it, and this month it came just a little bit closer to reality. Following a massive financial investment and the closure of their sister company Pergamon Compact Solutions, Mirrorsoft have taken up the reins to become Europe's first premier R&D software house for CD ROM and CDI.

It's some time now since tycoon Robert Maxwell pumped £5 million into Compact Solutions, with the instructions that the company should carry out research and product development for CD-ROM and CDI. The result was a number of rather obscure products, including the Pesticides disk (check the molecular structure of Diethylawfulterracide, Professor), the better known and comparatively successful (1500 sold) interactive CD Guinness Book of Records, and a small group of people who knew more about new technology than anyone else in the UK.

At the same time, sister company Mirrorsoft were getting closely involved with Cinemaware in the US – a company renowned for their continual flirtation with new technology (see last month's ACE) – and FTL, who are also involved in CD-ROM game development for the FM Towns. The long term plan was for Mirrorsoft to make use of Compact Solutions' expertise and develop game styles and strategies that would be suitable for CD-I and CD-ROM when they appeared on the market in large enough numbers.

Then in a sudden surprise development, Maxwell closed down Compact Solutions. The reason given was that the company was falling between two stools: it wasn't a business company, so it shouldn't be selling Pesticide disks, and it wasn't an entertainment company, so it shouldn't be fiddling around with the Guinness Book of Records. Almost overnight, Mirrorsoft inherited the entertainment side of Compact Solutions, the Guinness project, and – far more importantly for us gamesplayers – almost all the expertise plus a goodly share of the original investment. Suddenly, a British games software house has become a multi-million pound research and development organisation into new technology.

The Mirrorsoft team at their hotel in Nice, shortly after announcing their inheritance of the Compact Solutions new technology portfolio. Boss Peter Bilotta is second from the right, beside company spokeswoman Cathy Campos.

'One of the first steps for us is going to be the signing of a major technology development agreement with Cinemaware in the US,' says Mirrorsoft boss Peter Bilotta. 'The aim will be to combine our technical expertise with theirs, and to add in our marketing skills and distribution know-how in Europe.' Ventures will include CD ROM versions of some of Cinemaware's latest releases. The two companies have already worked together one CD ROM game, *Defender of the Crown*.

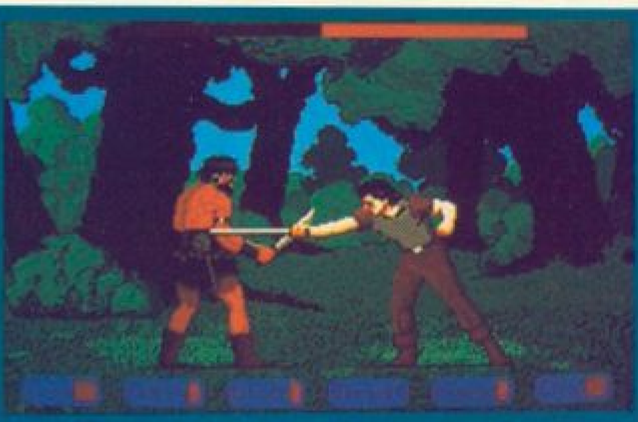
Mirrorsoft are also 'very pleased' with the new CD Amiga from Commodore. 'We attended their presentation,' says Mirrorsoft spokeswoman Cathy Campos, 'and we think it's a great idea. It's just good to see a company like Commodore thinking of the future and not resting on its laurels.'

And the FM Towns...'We're quite knocked out by that one,' reports Cathy. 'We will be developing for it – and the fact that we've got one in the office could mean that we'll be doing so in the near future.'

Of course ACE readers have known about CD ROM and CDI for some time now, but many people in the entertainment market are still dubious about the new developments, pointing that the systems are still unreleased in the UK. 'This is foolish,' points out Cathy firmly. 'Look at the 16 bit market. It was our foresight that, four years ago, lead us to develop 16-bit titles before the user bases were established. That foresight put us where we are today. The new technologies for games are so complex that people won't simply be able to turn around and start putting out games. CD is definitely the way the future is heading, and if you adopt a wait-and-see attitude you're going to be left behind.'

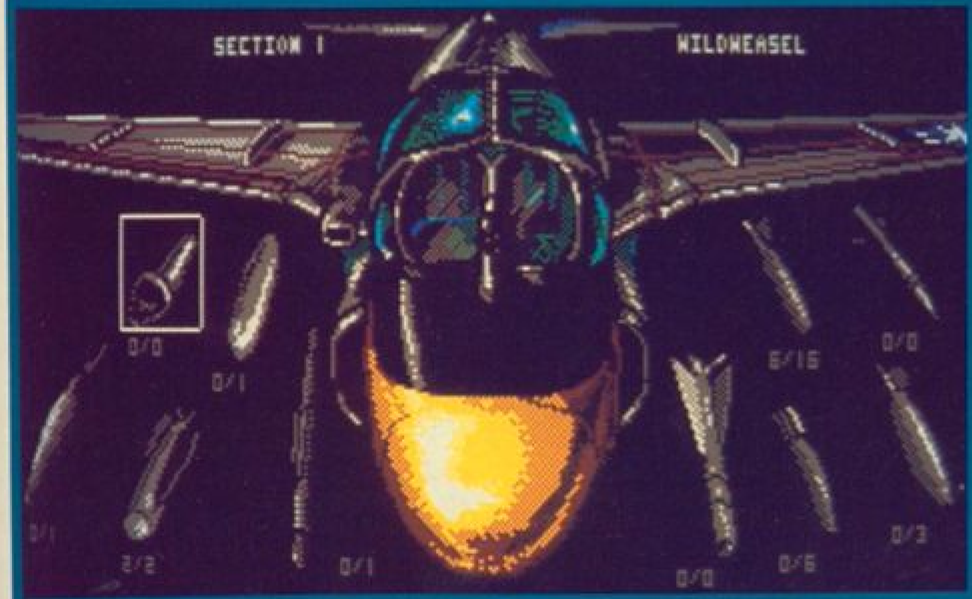
Here at ACE we're counting down to the days when we'll be playing truly interactive movies, complete with stereo sound, full motion video, and vast data handling capacities. It's not that far away now – Philips are due to launch in around twelve months from now. We're ready...and so, it seems, is Mirrorsoft.

Return of Lord of the Rings
Beam Software, who back in the good old days produced Tolkien games for Melbourne House, are now back in business and bringing out another title based on The Lord of The Rings. The game involves character control and strategy, with arcade style fighting sequences of the stab and slash variety. This is something of a cosmopolitan joint venture - the game was designed by Beam Software in Australia, but actually programmed by Spinnaker in the States. Out soon for the PC, but with ST, Amiga, and Mac versions to follow.

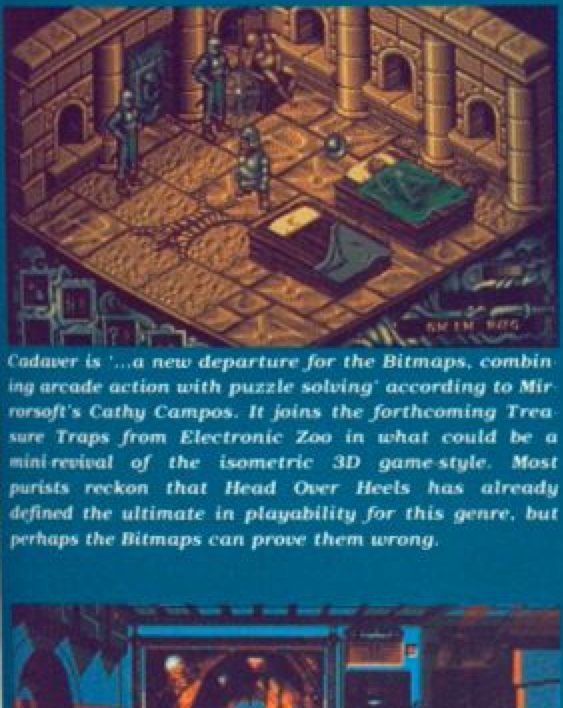


Gamestorm!

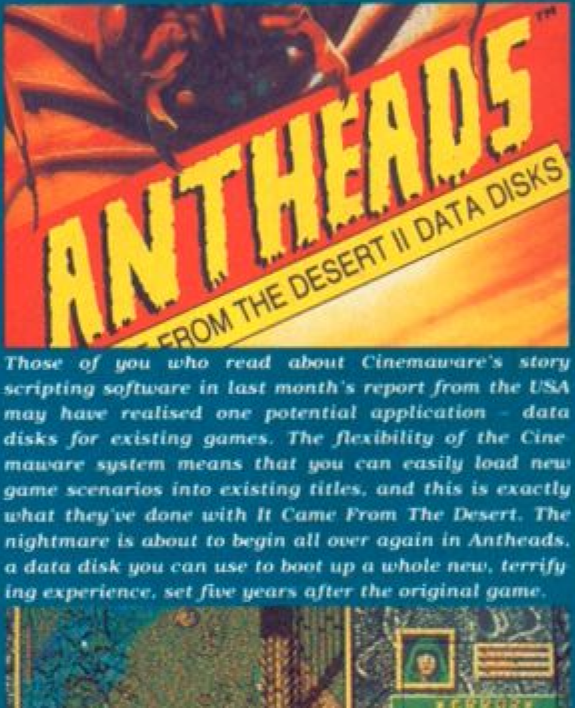
As well as their ventures into new technology, Mirrorsoft are continuing their policy of supporting affiliated software houses in Europe. At Nice they announced new products from Cinemaware, Spectrum Holobyte, Beam Software, Millenium (a new label from Logotron - see the news pages), the Bitmap Bros, PSS, and Realtime Software. Here's a quick glimps of some of the up-and-coming titles...



Flight of the Intruder is Spectrum Holobytes' sequel to Falcon, but the designers have attempted to include a mite more strategy. You're pitched headlong into the Linebacker campaign in 1972 over North Vietnam and must emerge victorious by interacting with fellow pilots, masterminidng strategy from mission control, and - of course - storming the skies in either an A6 Intruder or F4 Phantom.



Cadaver is '...a new departure for the Bitmaps, combining arcade action with puzzle solving' according to Mirrorsoft's Cathy Campos. It joins the forthcoming Treasure Traps from Electronic Zoo in what could be a mini-revival of the isometric 3D game-style. Most purists reckon that Head Over Heels has already defined the ultimate in playability for this genre, but perhaps the Bitmaps can prove them wrong.


ANTHEADS
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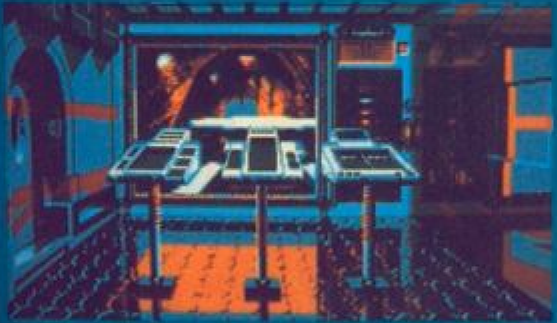
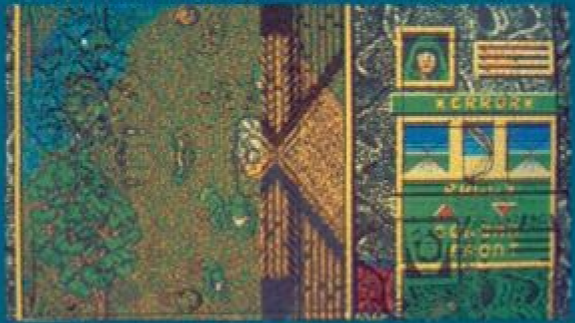
FROM THE DESERT II DATA DISKS

Those of you who read about Cinemaware's story scripting software in last month's report from the USA may have realised one potential application - data disks for existing games. The flexibility of the Cinemaware system means that you can easily load new game scenarios into existing titles, and this is exactly what they've done with It Came From The Desert. The nightmare is about to begin all over again in Antheads, a data disk you can use to boot up a whole new, terrifying experience, set five years after the original game.

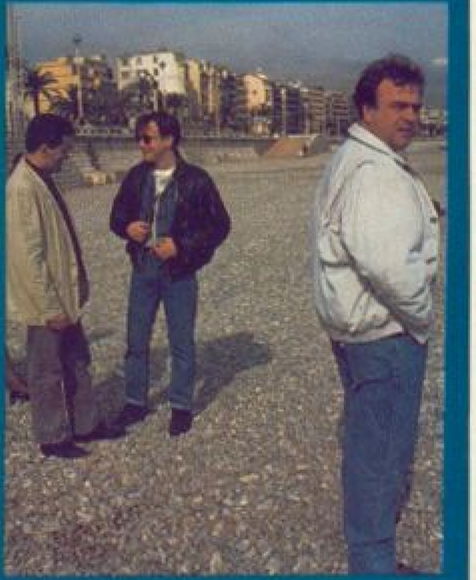


Realtime Software are going beyond Carrier Command with their latest release through Imageworks: Duster. The game uses the same 3D filled vectors routines as Realtime's previous games, but includes fantasy role playing elements as you take the part of a mutant bug destroyer on the Planet heaven in 3800AD. At last! An FRPG, vector graphics version of Centipede!



PSS' Battlemaster attempts to combine pretty graphics with the depth of play of fantasy RPG. Four races, animated combat and encounters, and enhanced strategic elements involving control of armies and character interaction should make this an interesting release when it comes out for the ST, Amiga, and PC compatibles later this year. Pity there aren't any 8 bit versions, though.

A couple of Bitmap Boys on the beach at Nice.



CLOUD KINGDOMS
Cloud 79 kingdoms 00000000 01
LEMON
Cloud 83 kingdoms 00000200 08
Cloud 28 kingdoms 00001602 08

THE GAME WITH WITH THE FIRST INJECTION-MOULDED, EIGHT-WAY ROLLING, RUBBER-BOTTOMED SOFTWARE HERO!

When Terry's magic crystals are stolen by Baron von Bonsai and taken to the land of Cloud Kingdoms there's only one thing to do! He climbs into his super-giant green skycopter and sets off to rescue them. There Terry searches each kingdom collecting the crystals as he goes - but things aren't that easy.. along the way he encounters the Giant Rolling Eightballs and the Bad Insect Monsters...

Cloud Kingdoms is addictive arcade action all the way! Each of the 32 levels are totally different - explore them all and delight at the stunning graphics, sound effects and compulsive joystick twitching gameplay. This is one game you just wont' be able to switch off!!

- ★ WITH PINBALL BUMPERS, ICE, MAGNETS, BLACK HOLES, TRAPDOORS, ACID POOLS, LOCKED DOORS... TOO MANY TO LIST!
- ★ COLLECTABLES ON EACH SCREEN - PICK UP DIAMONDS, FRUIT, FLOWERS, KEYS, TREASURE CHESTS ...
- ★ EXTRA PICK-UPS - WINGS, PAINT POTS, CLOCKS, BOUNCING SHOES, RUNNING SHOES, FIZZY POP AND POTION.
- ★ ST VERSION FEATURES AMIGA-QUALITY SOUND.
- ★ BY DENE CARTER - THE CREATOR OF HIT TITLES SUCH AS 'DRUID' AND 'ENLIGHTENMENT'.

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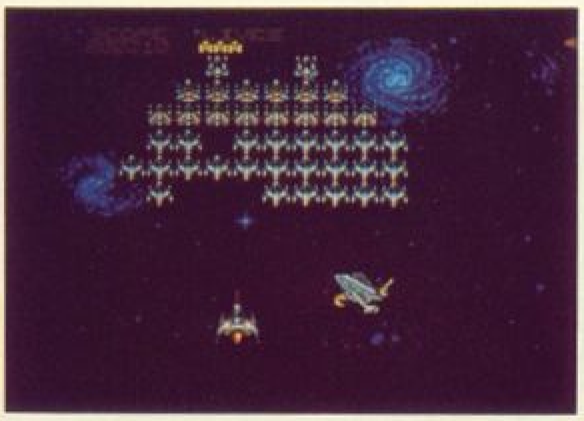
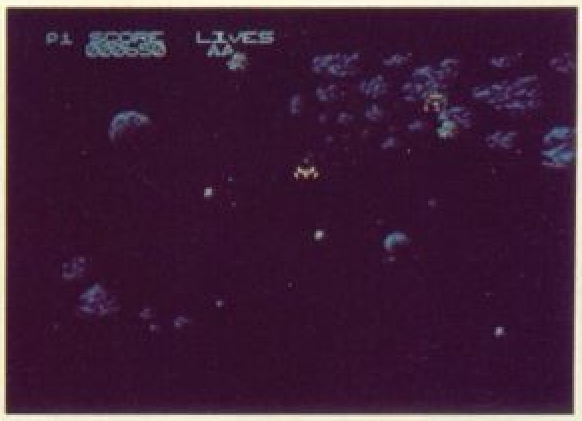
CD Giveaway



1. Are those Mexican Killer Bees or visitors from another Galaxy?



2 Get your rocks off in this 16-bit version of the game that still appears in many modern arcades despite being nearly ten years old!

There's something wrong here. You're grasping the joystick, eyes glued to the screen, blasting away at one of the most popular arcade games of the early 80s. In your ears are the resounding, crystal clear sounds of some of the greatest hits of 1981.

Except it's 1990, and the sound your hearing is pure CD quality from your portable CD player, and the game is *Renaissance* from Impressions. Yup, it's blast-from-the-past time with this latest release (reviewed in this issue) which does what everyone always talks about: takes the greatest hits of yesteryear and translates them onto todays 16-bit machines.

Renaissance costs £19.95 for ST & Amiga. To celebrate its release, Impressions are giving ACE readers the chance to win one of three state-of-the-art portable CD players. In addition, there are no less than 50 runners-up prizes of T-shirts, free games, and posters – see the prize panel for full details.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

It couldn't be easier. Take your first step to the ultimate luxury in portable sounds by examining the screenshots on this page. Each shot has a number printed below it and a caption that follows. In the ENTRY PANEL below there is a list of three games. All you have to do is is use your limitless skill and judgement to decide which screenshot comes from which game and then pop the answer on a postcard and send it to the address shown in the ENTRY PANEL. Easy eh? So jump to it!

THE PRIZES

Here's the list of goodies on offer.

1. THREE FIRST PRIZES of SONY D22 CD-Walkmans will go to the first three correct entries pulled out of the hat after the closing date. The D22 is the latest in the CD-Walkman range and at the time of writing wasn't even available in the shops, so it not only sounds good, it's exclusive too. First prize winners will also receive a free copy of *Renaissance*.

2. TWENTY SECOND PRIZES will go to the following twenty correct entries out of the hat. Each second prize winner will receive a free copy of *Renaissance* and an Impressions T-shirt.

3. THIRTY THIRD PRIZES will wing their way to the thirty runners-up, each prize winner receiving a free copy of *Hyperaction* and a poster.

Impressions have got three portable CD players to present to lucky ACE readers to celebrate their blast from the past: *Renaissance.*

ENTRY PANEL

Here's how to enter:

1. Examine the three screenshots on this page. Each one comes from Impressions' new release, Renaissance.

2. When you've identified the screenshots, jot down on a postcard the following information:
I think Screenshot 1 is from ....(enter name of game here)
I think Screenshot 2 is from ....(enter name of game here)
I think Screenshot 3 is from ....(enter name of game here).
NB Check out the review of *Renaissance* on page 50 if you need help.

3. Add your name and address. Please include a telephone number if possible as this helps us to notify prizewinners more efficiently.

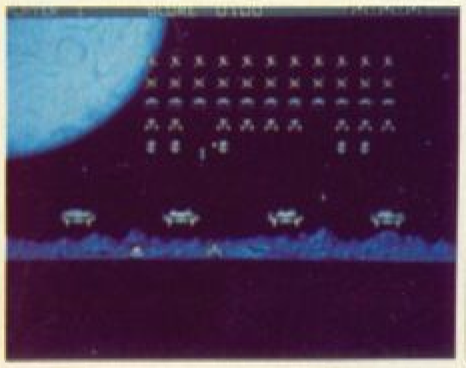
4. It will also help us if you include answers to the following questions, but these are NOT part of the competition and are not required to qualify you for a prize:

a) Name two other magazines you buy regularly.
b) How old are you?
c) Which computer do you own?
d) Do you buy ACE regularly, occasionally, or is this the first copy you have bought?

4. Post the card to ACE CD Competition, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Closing date for entries is 5th May 1990.

5. Please note that employees of EMAP B&CP, Impressions, or anyone involved in the production, sale and distribution of their products are not eligible for entry.

3. Inspired by one the most famous coin-op games every produced, this is one invasion that forced Britain to surrender.



Total Power!

Phew! We've seen some awesome machines since we issued the ACE Challenge, but the specification for this little baby breaks all the records. Check out the Cybercube PCS45 and pray to St Galaxian, the patron saint of games players, for one of your own...

GREAT FOR GAMES

The graphics spec of the PCS45 could have been tailor-made for games programmers. Apart from the tremendous colour and resolution potential, the machine offers hardware scrolling and panning (in pixels), multi-screen buffering (excellent for full-screen animation), extended playfields, and hardware graphics commands for fast handling of sprites and masks. Future upgrades are planned to include a real-time 256 colour digitiser and live camera insertion into the standard computer display. Another intriguing project is to provide an extension enabling the user to superimpose several different screens on top of each other – a feature that could possibly be used to generate higher-resolution displays on colour TVs.

Praise ye the Spectrum. Sir Clive's little black box not only launched a new age of gaming, but it also gave many people their first opportunity to break into the hardware design market. In attics all over Europe, crazed boffins slaved into the small hours, designing everything from anti-RAM-Pack wobble devices to black boxes for controlling your Cray Mark 2 using your Spectrum Plus. Now, years later, those same people are bringing us the latest games technology: Flare Technology, for example, ex-Sinclair designers, responsible for the Konix hardware spec; and now, in Canada, Cybercube Research. What they've come up with is...well, words fail us. Let's just say it's probably the most awesome games machine spec currently in existence.

Cybercube is run by three brothers: Gunther, Ralf, and Ulrich Doewich. They started business in West Germany in 1984, calling themselves Ionis Software International and producing (amongst other things) a parallel I/O board and plotter interface for the Spectrum, an Amstrad MIDI interface.

"We soon realised that there was a huge gap between the systems you could theoretically design and the existing ones," recalls Ralf, "During one of our regular meetings we bet that we could assemble a computer that would make full use of high integration, super fast processor performance, and state of the art technology..."

This remained something of a dream until the company reformed as Cybercube Research Ltd after the brothers moved to Canada. "The new name reflects the new major product: parallel computer systems based on the hYpERCUBE model (combine Cybernetics and Hypercube and you get Cybercube". Their first product? Miracle Number 1, or MINI as it's affec-

THE ACE CHALLENGE

We launched the ACE Challenge in November 1989 to encourage hardware initiatives in the entertainment sector. The Challenge offers £20000 to developers of hardware (and the software that runs on it) providing they fulfil certain conditions, details of which are available from us on request. The original ACE challenge machine specification was not necessarily our view of an ideal games computer, but was intended to spark off discussion and debate – which it certainly has! The Cybercube is the latest in a series of hot hardware projects to be profiled as part of the ACE Challenge Debate...

ISSUE 26 · NOVEMBER 1989 · £1.50

ACE

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Oi! Someone's nicked your cover booklet!

THE ACE CHALLENGE

If your copy of The ACE Challenge is missing when you purchase the magazine, ask your newsagent for a replacement.

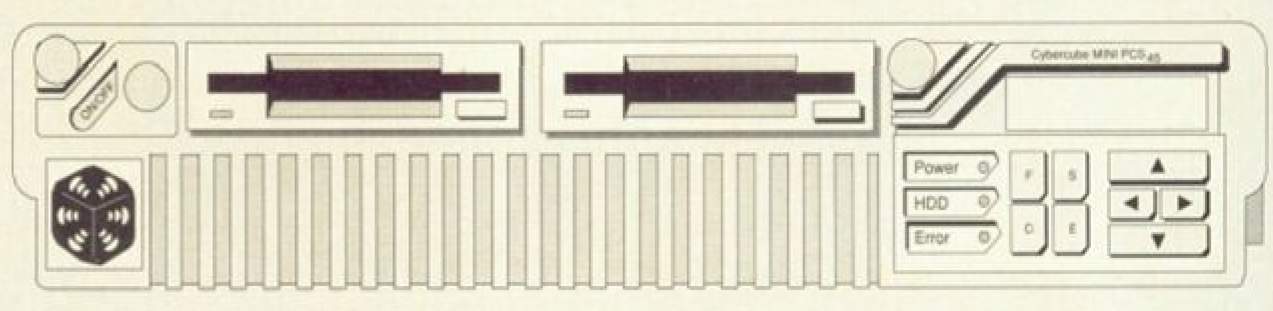
A PC ENGINE FOR BRITAIN

The secret's out! See page 37...

RED hot TAPE

US technology is transforming the humble video tape recorder into a fully interactive games system. Find out more on page 35...

Plus...the latest games, including Vette and The Untouchables; David Braben on Elite 3; and a maniac's guide to 16-bit racing sims



The Cybercube MINI PCS45

The PCS45 has a number of innovative features designed to make life easier for the user. If there's a problem – processor shutdown, RAM failure or suchlike – there's an LCD front panel that clearly explains the condition in English (no obscure error codes or Guru Meditations). You can also set up the system to perform certain tasks (or your own if you're a programmer) sending a fax, for example, or controlling peripherals – without having to attach a keyboard or monitor, making the system effective even when on the move. Other features include: auto power up/down, alarm wake up, modem request wake up, 192K battery backed up RAM, battery manager, fax, and modem slot (optional).

PACKAGE DETAILS

- Built in power supply.
- Boardsize: 360mmx260mm
- Case: 400mm x 300mm x 80mm
- ROM based OS, multiprocessor, multitasking, and multi-user.
- Emulators for other processor types
- BASIC compiler/interpreter
- C++ compiler, PASCAL, and LISP
- Text editor (in ROM)
- Assembler/Debugger (ROM)
- UNIX functions library
- Graphics DTP package
- The basic version contains console, keyboard, mouse, discs, power supply, software, and documentation.

tionately called. It will be available both as a home machine (the MINI PCS45) and in a specially configured arcade system: the Phantom.

MULTI-POSSIBILITY

'We think the MINI and Phantom systems are best suited for multi-player, multi-scenario simulations,' says Ralf. 'Just look at the floating point performance – even in the basic unit you get 12 mflops, which can be increased to 28 mflops on-board. The integer performance is up to 100 MIPS (expandable to 220 MIPS).'

Together with the display of 262144 colours on-screen simultaneously from a palette of 16 million, this power can give you almost photographic image realism on-screen. And if that's not enough for you, there's the sound spec, which is pretty awesome as well: 6 FM channels for music and voice, 6 squarewave and 6 noise channels for sound effects. 'Just wait till you the music demo,' says Ralf, 'and what's more, we can handle samples at up to 45kHz'

CYBERCUBE MINI PCS45

The Cybercube Mini is a parallel computer system. The basic version consists of 4 32bit RISC and one I/O processor. The number of CPU's can be increased to a maximum of 9 on-board. Additional processors can be linked through a fast Local Area Network.

MAIN CPU

32-bit RISC processor, 15-30Mhz, max. instruction throughput 10-30MIPS. Integrated 4MFLOPS Floating Point Unit. LAN controller. Timers. Job Scheduler. Fast Static RAM (local). DMA. Data transfer rates up to 26.5 MBytes/sec.

MAIN RAM

Up to 32 Mbytes 70/80ns SIMM DRAM's. Configurations 4,8,16,32 Mbytes. Customised DRAM controller with integrated cache.

ROM CPU

As Main CPU.

ROM & RAM

256K basic and up to 2Mbyte ROM. The operating system, a debugger, and the editor are all ROM based. Further software packages can be transferred to the Flash EPROM area, thus allowing fast switching between applications. System status is preserved after power down. 128K of fast static RAM with battery back-up.

VIDEO CPU

As main CPU, but with a slightly slower maximum data transfer rate (26.0 Mbytes/sec).

VIDEO RAM

1 Mbyte of 100ns VRAM + 128K fast static RAM for program code, data, and graphic buffers.

VIDEO CONTROLLER

New 32-bit video controller and own gate array support several video standards. 24-bit colour palette included. Internal and external Sync modes allowing scene insertion into live camera data. Interlaced/non-interlaced video. Pixel clock 10-100Mhz, programmable in 6 Mhz steps.

COLOUR AND RESOLUTIONS

Programmable resolutions ranging from 4x4 up to 1280 horizontal by 1024 vertical. Two colour modes are included: 256 colours or 16 million colours simultaneously on-screen (in practice this is limited by the resolution of the display to 262144). Up to 21 screens can be held in memory. Video gate array supports hardware scrolling and panning.

DISK CONTROLLERS

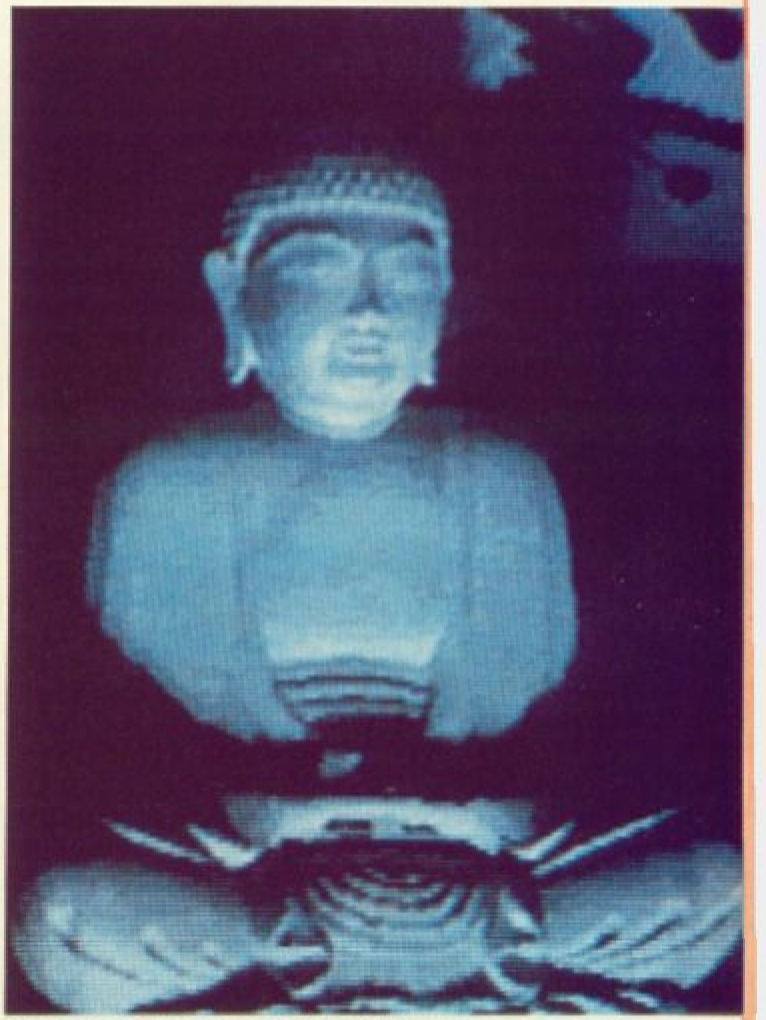
16 bit RISC processor with onboard ROM and RAM; also 64K fast static RAM for disk caching and 32K ROM with high level disk I/O and File Server routines.

I/O CPU

8Mhz CPU with watchdog timer, 2 parallel and 4 serial ports, timers, clock generators, and interrupt controller (all on gate array). Auto power up/down, full modem support, 6 FM channels + 6 squarewave channels + 6 noise channels. Also 64K fast static RAM with battery backup plus 32K ROM for I/O routines, together with keyboard, MIDI, printer, and serial buffers.

INTERFACES

3 LAN connectors with priority control up to 20Mbits/sec.
1 Centronics port – bidirectional., 2 serial ports (RS232)
1 keyboard connector
2 MIDI connectors (IN, OUT/THRU) speeds 31250 and 62500 baud.
1 LCD panel 2x16 chars + 8 key keypad (no monitor of keyboard necessary to setup the system for specific tasks. Easy shut-down recovery, constant system status monitoring).
1 analogue video connector; 1 SCSI-II connector; 1 stereo sound connector (stereo amplifier on board); Volume control, on/off switch, LED's.
2 Joystick ports (adapter needed for Atari type joysticks).
2 floppy and 1 SCSI hard drive ports.



One of the images generated by the IMME system.

Latest news from Subjective Technologies

Remember ST? We profiled them briefly last month in our American issue, telling you how they had developed a 'hyperspace room' and a new system called the IMME: the Interactive Multi-Media Engine. We've now received further news from president Jack Lampl: "The highlight of the system is its unique ability to respond to a variety of triggering stimuli via its Reconfigurable Multi-Purpose Interface (RMPI). Our view is that traditional interactive systems such as those based on computer driven laservideo players have used limited input modalities, generally mouse of touch screen to choose from a small range of predefined audio and video tracks. The IMME overcomes this barrier by providing sensual input capability through the RMPI.

"The input and storage structure of the IMME is designed to allow the development of applications that can present information in a non-linear manner. This is desirable when simple black and white answers do not adequately describe a problem or express a particular existential condition. The IMME will support these advanced applications with proprietary software tools that assist in the creation of complex algorithms that interpret the input data and control multimedia output.

"One of the exciting potentials of these dynamic simulations is that they allow the creative developer to emotionally involve users in the sensations of multidimensional, changing, and interdependent phenomena. This will be the key to learning and entertainment in the 1990's and beyond..."

We are currently attempting to arrange for a display of the IMME engine at the CES show at Earls Court in September. Keep your fingers' crossed!

ON SAFARI

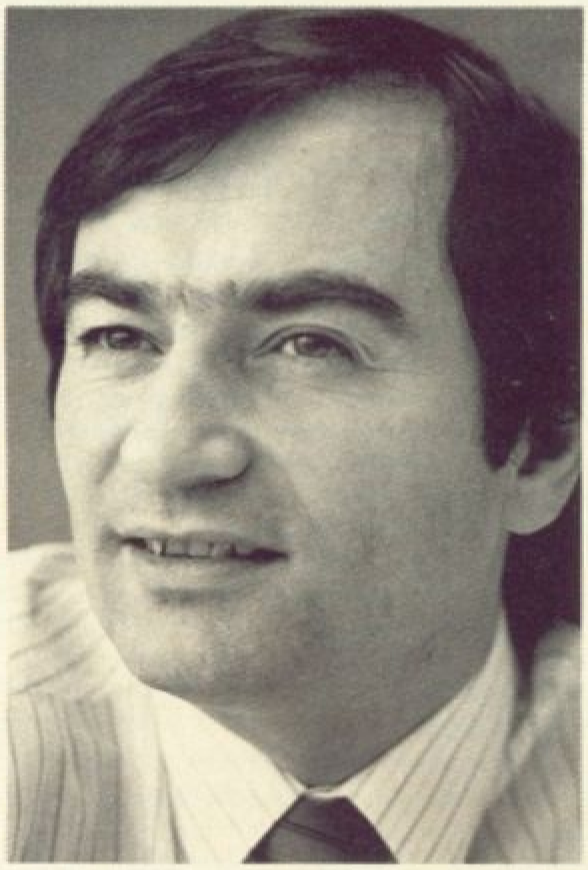
FORGET CD, SAYS ATARI BOSS BOB GLEADOW, WE'RE TALKING PANTHERS AND LYNXES...

First in a new series of up-to-the-minute ACE interviews, Rik Haynes talks to Bob Gleadow, the UK boss of Atari...

Is the ST console still a goer?

• The ST console is known as project Panther, it will be circa £150, keyboard-less, with a 68000 at 16MHz and advanced graphics - better than an STE's graphics. Its storage medium will be either ROM or disk depending on how we finally configure it. The problem with Panther is simply that of resource allocation, Panther development has been continuing as a secondary priority to the Lynx. Software houses will get their Panther systems later this year. The timing of it will mean that we won't have hardware and software for this Christmas. From a marketing stand-point we want to give the Lynx a clear field this year.

With the current emphasis towards home user CD-ROM devices from Japanese companies like Fujitsu and NEC plus Commodore with a CD-ROM version of the Amiga, do you see Atari following suit?



Bob Gleadow, Atari UK supremo, keeps mum about Atari CD products

• Cast your mind back. MSX – ran CD-ROM, had some great CD-ROM and laser disc software, but didn't happen; then CD-ROM's were relatively expensive and I believe that adding a CD-ROM today in end user terms must add £150-£200 to the retail price. Is it therefore viable yet? If the market says yes we'll also have one, we don't believe it is ready to say yes – yet! When the market is ready, we have a product which we've had for two years now but has no software to go with it.

What's the future of CD-ROM technology then?

• I see a major opportunity for CD-ROM in intuitive learning programs. As for games, you can get hundreds of today's games on a single compact disc. I'm not sure that the price of the hardware isn't going to prevent that from happening in the next two years. CD technology itself is advancing quite quickly, eventually you'll get very fast and graphically great games of TV quality. But that will actually only take us back to where MSX was with the laser disc back in 1984.

I think the Sony/Philips CDI system is a step in the right direction but it's still expensive and comes within my three year plan for when CD's become a built-in feature. The built-in CD of three years time will obviously be a CDI system, and by then there should be a whole wad of software available which makes it worthwhile – it still won't be cheap though.

When will the Lynx be launched in the UK?

• The Lynx will sell in the UK for £179.99, the £149.99 price could be available but that's without the built-in game and power supply. As a consumer I'm always aggravated when I get home and find a product hasn't got the batteries or plug needed to operate it. So we're going at £179.99, and that includes California Games cart, power supply and a cable that allows you to link to another Lynx. It will be available in April through Dixons and other stores. There are seven titles available now, with at least another 23 games due over the next 12 months. The next three will be Rampage, Gauntlet III and Chips Challenge. Obviously the recent tie-up with Tengen is important. The Lynx connectivity factor is the key to success. You have a new concept in portability, we'll sell more than a million Lynx's this year without a doubt. I see no reason why it's a market that should be any less than that of the Walkman. Software writers are very enthusiastic about the concept and the technical abilities of the machine. We offer a Lynx development kit, but at the moment we can't produce these kits fast enough. We're hoping to organise a UK developers conference in April which will embody the Lynx, Portfolio, STE and the 7800 games console.

> *"Three years ago Atari was on its knees."*
>
> **Bob Gleadow, Atari UK boss**

Are there going to be any future enhancements to the Lynx?

• We're developing an infrared connector which will allow you to link up the Lynx without the use of a wire. There's also potential for a full TV tuner. Enhanced models of the Lynx are currently on the drawing board, but their release is at least two years away.

Do you feel worried about NEC's colour portable PC Engine?

• At the moment I feel no willingness to react to what really is a rumour.

Is Atari announcing any new products this year?

• No, we're busy fulfilling our existing product plans for the Lynx, STE and TT.

Do you ever envisage a £199 ST?

• No, most of the cost reductions with computer manufacturing have been achieved in the semiconductor area, the electromechanical parts such as the power supply, keyboard and disk drive represent a larger proportion of the cost of the machine. This means that dramatic cost reductions are unlikely. In the future, semiconductor content will rise for the same cost, so you'll get more RAM, advanced processors and blitter chips – all within the £299 price-point.

How do you view the timeless ST vs Amiga debate?

• With some amusement, because I recognise that both machines have their strengths and weaknesses – the reason this is likely to be a long debate is that there is truth in both arguments.

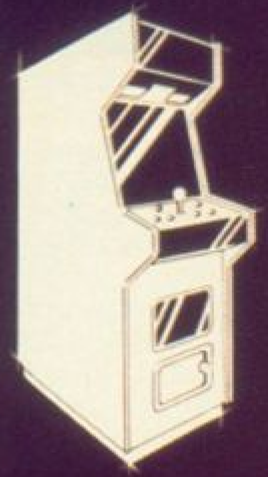
HOLDING OUR BREATH

Commodore have are developing a CD-ROM console based on Amiga technology. Are Atari going to follow suit?

At the moment, the answer seems to be no. But we can reveal that, at the time of going to press, Atari were planning to make an announcement to software developers regarding a new product later this month. Will it be a CD-ROM unit?

Here at ACE we reckon that if Atari are going to maintain a foothold in new technology a CD-ROM machine is essential. This is because CD technology takes a long time for software developers to get to grips with. To develop titles using the new systems will require at least twelve months – and Philips CDI, which is likely to start the ball rolling in earnest – is now exactly one year away from release, with titles currently being commissioned by Philips for publication next year. No-one wants to rush into new markets, but this is one time when fortune will favour the brave. Non-disclosure agreements allowing, we'll let you know next month what Atari have to say for themselves at the conference.

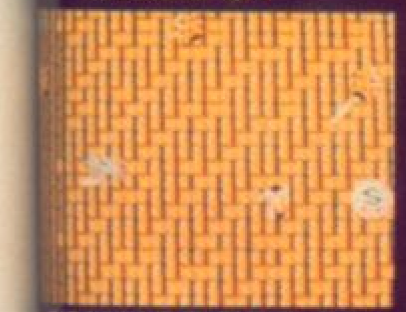
ELECTROCOIN



SNK

AMIGA

ATARI ST



COMMODORE 64

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CASSETTE	£9.95
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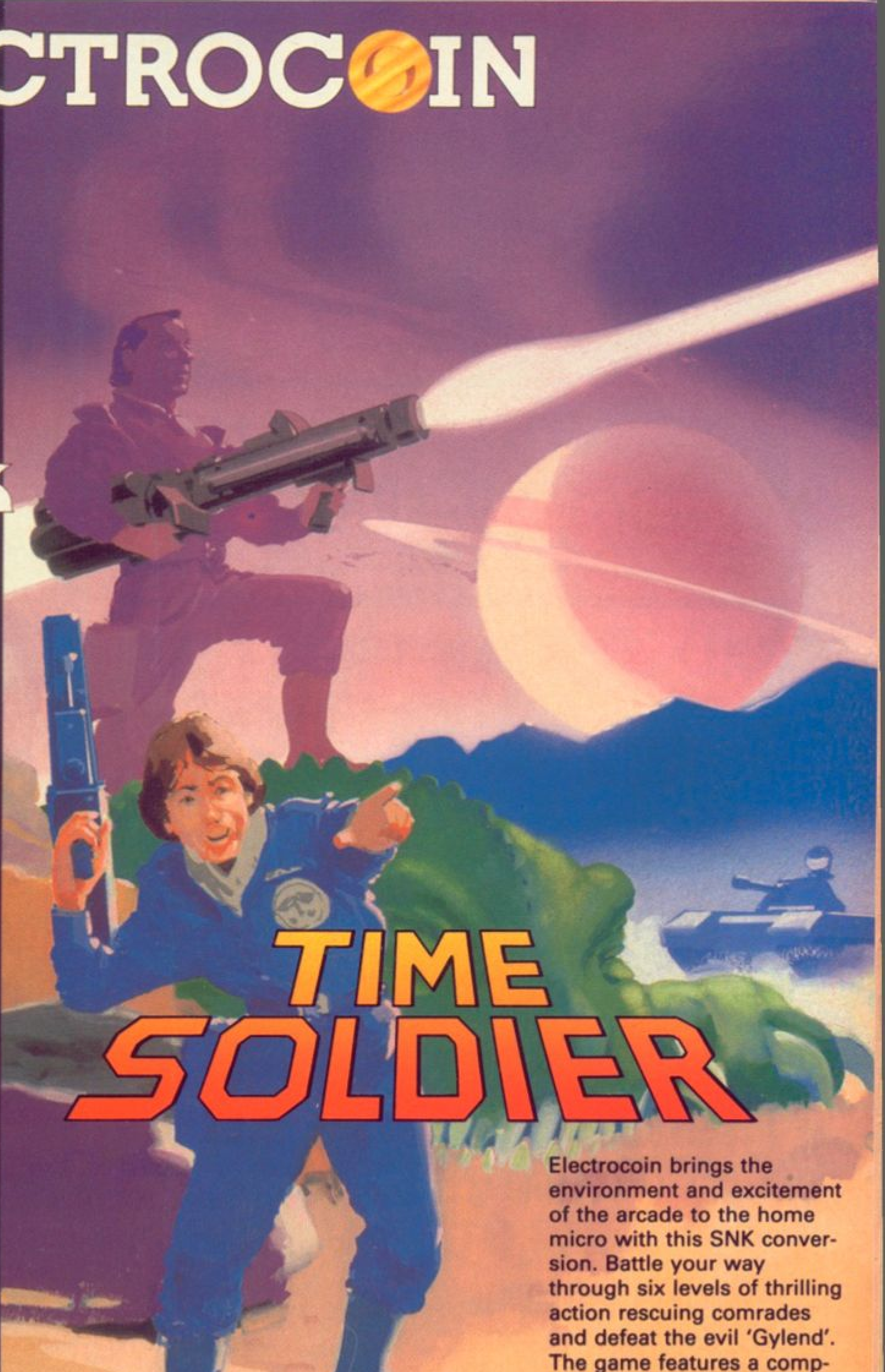


TIME SOLDIER

Electrocoin brings the environment and excitement of the arcade to the home micro with this SNK conversion. Battle your way through six levels of thrilling action rescuing comrades and defeat the evil 'Gylend'. The game features a complete arcade environment, comprehensive animated effects and special collectable bonus weapons.

ARCADE ACE

JOHN COOK TAKES ANOTHER GIANT LEAP INTO COIN-OP COUNTR

From Blackpool to Tokyo in two pages - it could only happen in ACE, where John Cook looks behind the events of the last two major major coin-op shows of the season

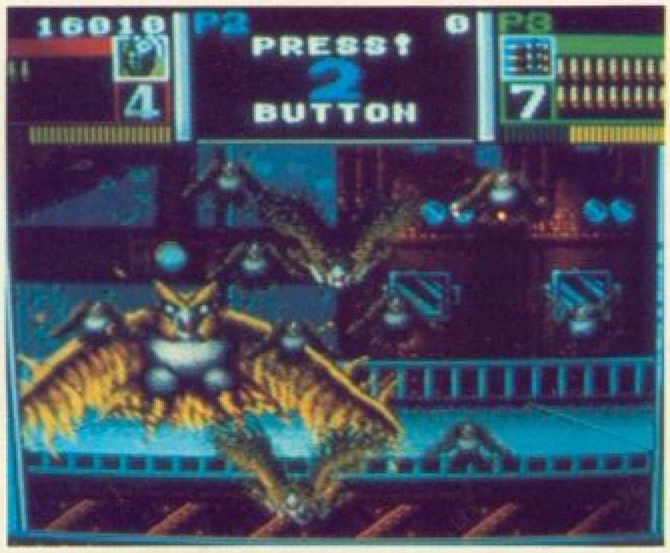
THEY STILL MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO

PT 42

(ONE OF A SERIES)

Mow'em down games continue to proliferate and we've covered both *Beastbusters* (SNK) and *Line of Fire* (Sega) in previous issues. My personal feelings that these sorts of *Op Wolf* clones are, shall we say, a tad unhealthy have only been increased by close examination of the promotional literature being given away by the distributors. For *Beastbusters* – "Gives you the feeling of the ACTUAL GUN" (their capitals. *Line of Fire* – "enables you to actually feel the thrilling realism of firing a weapon," and "experience the authentic feel of shooting a machine gun!"

Call me a wimp – but if the "thrilling realism" of firing a machine gun is so cool, why don't they just bring back national service? Let's hope this boring mow-em down genre dies the death it deserves – and soon.



SNK's Beastbusters: enough to make you 'owl with despair?

THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO

PT 1

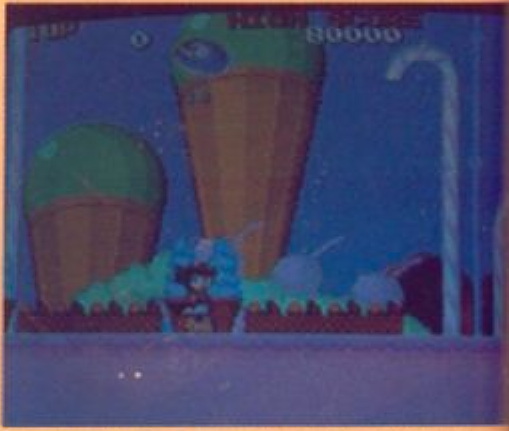
When the traditional coin-op scene starts to get tedious and the takings decline, it's time to get the novelties out – that's the accepted wisdom at any rate. There ought to be a government health warning on some of them – like *Cop Capers* for instance. Billed as the "Stunning novelty of the 90's", those of a suitable age will almost certainly suffer from severe early 70's flashbacks, as you guide a ping pong ball down a vertical playfield. Likewise the crane grabber variants. Funny old world, isn't it.

One innovation that is trickling over the Atlantic as a result of the downturn is coin-operated basketball (not destined to work in the UK...the balls would inevitably get nicked) and electronic darts. Both highly popular in US arcades, they're unlikely to succeed here.

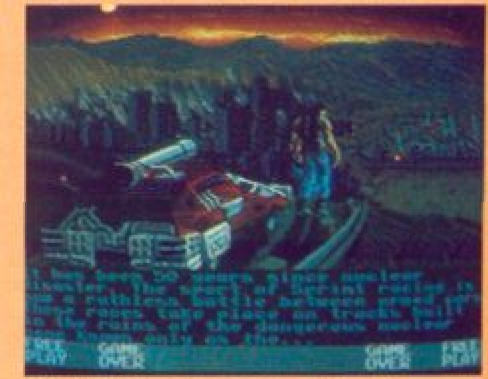
Best new pinball of the show – *Whirlwind* from Williams – a good follow up to the popular Earthshaker, although the best sound must go to the *Robocop* pinball, licensed through Ocean by Data East. Superb use of sampled sounds from the movie raise the average playfield to something almost enjoyable. Best of all – when you tilt the table – come a loud Robocop voice saying – "CREEP!!!". This I like.

I once went to Blackpool in February – everything was closed and the town had undergone some hideous conversion into a major construction site, undergoing its annual facelift before the punters start flooding back later in the year.

The single area of activity was centred around the Winter Gardens where the UK coin-op trade was examining the latest releases, casting runes and trailing through goat entrails in order to try and obtain the machines that would keep the funsters throwing the money down the coin-slots this summer. Anyone expecting great new releases was going to be disappointed – they were being held back for the Tokyo show that followed a couple of weeks afterwards, but there was enough on display to ensure that no-one wasted the train fare.



Marvel Land from Namco: complete with giant ice cream cones



Atari's Badlands – nuclear destruction on wheels.

Lots of new PCB's of course, the favourite of which was the cute and cuddly ***Marvel Land*** from Namco. In the same mould as all those *Wonderboy* games, it may well rival *Monster Land* (Namco's previous surreal cutsie) as the coin-op most likely to be tickled under the chin after playing. Controlling a Betty Boop character, you bounce around in tasteful shades of pastel giving the equally cute monsters a hard time by jumping – a common female ploy – and finding power-ups that will give you extra powers. Expect to see quite a lot of this one.

Most other new PCB's gave the ominous feeling of deja vu – pointing to the development stagnation that seems to have hit the programmers right now. ***Search and***

Rescue from SNK. Not at all similar to *Ikari-Warriors*, g'vnor. ***Air Buster***, distributed by Namco – well, I always did have a soft spot for *Thundercross*. ***Vapour Trail*** from Data East and ***Fire Shark*** – cor look Mum, more vertical scrollers. Yawn. ***Rough Racer*** (Sega) and ***Badlands*** (Atari) – come back *Super Sprint*, all is forgiven. Yawn.

PUNCH BELLY

Work off your frustration with this updated version of the old Test Your Strength machines

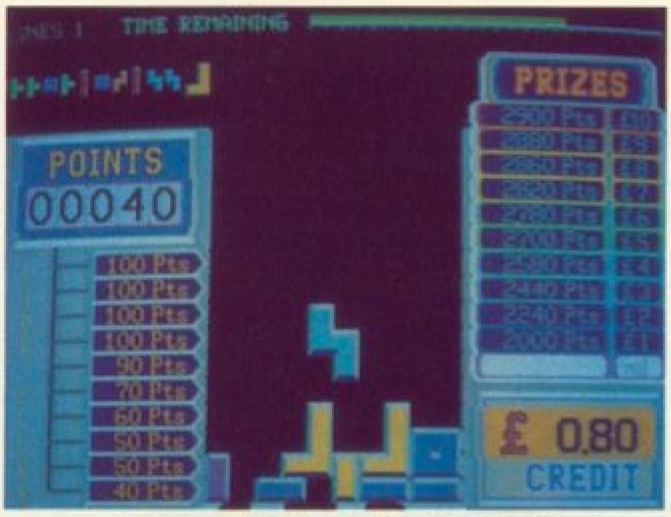
Best new original game had to go to Atari Games for the very excellent ***Klax***. A highly polished puzzle/arcade game, based on the manipulation of coloured tiles rather than shapes, it stands a chance of being another *Tetris*-like hit for them simply because of the lack of competition in the marketplace right now.

Most interesting PCB development was ***Cadash*** from Taito – a true role-playing arcade action hack where you choose your character class before you start the game and gain experience for monster bashing. More please – and better.

SKILL WITH PRIZES GETS NON-TRIVIAL

We've all got used to the SWP Trivia machines that are almost endemic in the pubs and clubs around the country. But the manufacturers have now thought of several other ways to try and challenge the punters. ***Spellbound*** gives you a selection of six letters from which you have to try and make four, five or six letter words for points – and points make prizes.

Other ideas include a *Connect Four* clone, which has you playing for money against the computer. Can't see that lasting long as clever punters formulate winning strategies. Best of all – how about playing *Tetris* for money? Yep – there is now a SWP that pays out if you score over a certain amount on *Tetris*. But at 50p a throw – you'd better brush up your technique on the home version first.



Tetris payout – but don't be deceived, this version is pretty tricky and the prizes don't come easy

THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO
PT 8

True story – true story. There I was, minding my own business, having a butchers at these here arcade games and – by golly by gosh, what did I spy other than a PC Engine hanging out of the coin-slot. Bloody Hell! As it happens, then, there's now a company called Tempest that is taking production PC Engines and modifying them to work with a JAMMA loom (the industry standard cabinet). They're selling them for about £500. But then the operators can just use existing PC Engine cards when they want to install a new game, rather than pay a further £600 or so for a new board. The trade is reported to be rabidly interested. I wonder if the shine might come off this one, however, if they hear the rumour that NEC are considering marketing the PC Engine in the UK later this year, for around the princely sum of £100?

THEY'RE TRYING TO MAKE THEM UNLIKE THEY USED TO
PT 1

Reports are coming through from the Tokyo AOU show held last week – with a little more optimism when it comes to the machine front. The NEO-GEO – the fab new system from SNK – was on show in cabinet. Impressive, they say, but there again, so was the price.

Big news was the unveiling of G-Loc from Sega. A flight-sim in the *Afterburner* mould, this has you on the tail of the enemy fighters and chasing 'em – rather than flying towards them like before. Apparently, the movement of the unit is even more vigorous than before, thus enabling the player to take a bucket of dirty washing and some soap suds into the cockpit – and thus save a visit to the laundrette.

A new golf game from Irem, *Major Title*, is being hailed as a leap forward – it must be astonishingly good to be thought better than Super Masters from Sega.

Lastly, a novelty game from Namco called *Cosmo Gangs* – based on Space Invaders, where you shoot advancing aliens with an electronic gun.Interesting, but it'll never replace the pure satisfaction of *Sweet Licks* – when you hit plastic moles over the head with a mallet. Take me home Daddy....

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CBM 64/128 Cassette - April -£9.99
CBM 64/128 Disk - April -£16.99

Screen shots from IBM and CBM disk versions.

IN THE PINK

HARDWARE FAILURE!

Just as we were about to go to press, the file containing the ACE Hardware Guide refused to undergo treatment at the hands of the Editor. We promise to have it rebuilt by next month and apologise for its temporary omission.

THE ACE CHARTS AND STOCKMARKET 100
The games charts that leave the others on the shelves. For the first time, you get charts showing which games are attracting the best reviews. That way you know which games really deserve to hit the high spots. You can also find out which software houses are flavour of the month in the unique ACE Stockmarket...and you can win prizes by predicting next month's positions.

ACE CLASSICS 105
We've split the software guide into two sections. This section profiles classic games that we believe you should add to your collection – if you don't have them already. We'll be slipping in alternative suggestions every month from now on, to give the committed collector a chance to build the ultimate games portfolio.

HOT OFF THE SHELVES 110
A new software choice selection that gives you a regularly updated list – and mini-reviews – of games that have been ACE rated in the last few months. Here's where to look if you want to head off to the shops and pluck a winner off the shelf.

ACE READERS PAGES 118
Everything from pen pals to second hand machines in the ACE market place.

THE ACE PRIZE PUZZLE..115
Are you related to Einstein? Is intelligence hereditary? If the answer to both these questions is yes, you could be in with a chance for a prize...

THE ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD 115
Years of frustration for idiots, hours of fun for the rest of us.

THE ACE DIARY 117
What's going on between now and the next issue of ACE.

ACE DEALS 116
Check out the latest special offers, from pens to a flight in *Miss Microprose*.

ASK JERRY!

We have a full-time Pink Pages reader's liaison officer: Melanie Costin, who will always be on hand to help you out with problems about Reader's Pages and or Pink Pages mailorder difficulties. And if you're a dealer and would like to place an advertisment in the pinks or arrange a voucher offer, contact Jerry Hall on 01-251 6222 Ext. 2485.

THE ACE STOCK MARKET

WELCOME TO THE BEST CHARTS AROUND – BECAUSE THEY WIN YOU PRIZES AND THEY'RE BASED ON THE AUTHORITATIVE OPINIONS OF GAMES EXPERTS AND REVIEWERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IF A GAME HITS THE HIGH SPOTS ON THESE PAGES, YOU KNOW IT BELONGS IN YOUR COLLECTION.

We've made a couple of final improvements to the Stockmarket this month. First, to avoid confusion, we've confined the name 'Stockmarket' to the Company Counter, because this is the only place which has 'share ratings' – and we've given the various 'counters' the more accessbile title of 'Charts'. Give us nought out of ten for originality and ten out of ten for ease of use!

Finally, we've FURTHER simplified the entry system. You now need to name only the FIRST game in each category, but whizz-kid chart watchers can still try to hit the jackpot by entering up to five titles for the section of their choice.

We believe these are the best charts around. That's because (with the exception of the Console Sales chart) they're based on REVIEWS – not on sales. Each month, ACE researchers read EVERY major British computing magazine. They note down ALL the review ratings for the games reviewed that month, together with the name of the software house, the machine the game runs on, and the name of the magazine the review appears in.

This data is fed into a spreadsheet and the charts you see on these pages are automatically calculated by the program..

There are three charts that deal with games. First, there's the MACHINE CHARTS. This tells you which games have been getting the highest review marks for each machine.

In addition to the Machine Charts, there's also the two processor charts, which show you which are the best reviewed 16-bit games and the best 8-bit ones. You can draw some interesting conclusions about 8-bit and 16-bit games by comparing these two charts.

Finally, there's the Stockmarket itself. This one tells you who the top ten software companies are this month and is really for the experts – you can check out how it works in the TYCOON box.

That's all there is to it. Now all you need to do is win a few prizes – the entry form is on page 120 and now it's easier than ever to win. So get out your crystal ball and start gazing...

Top Ten Console Sales compiled by Shekhana Computers, 2 Gladstone House, High Road, Wood Green, London N22. Tel: 01-889 9412, Fax: 01-889 9413 and at 221 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1 Tel: 01-631 4627

ROUND THREE WINNERS

The Company Counter was suspended in Round Three as we introduced new ratings. On the C64 counter everyone was defeated by *Bushido*, *Sim City*, and *Eye of Horus*, but **Andrew O'Brien** of Barrow in Furness was one of several who got two games in the correct positions. Similarly, almost everyone was put off by the appearance of *Super Wonder Boy* in the Spectrum charts, but **David Pearl** of Barnsley managed to get all five titles correct, though only one in the correct position, narrowly beating A.Bennett of Bootle who got four titles correct and three in the right places. **Lee Mosley** of Sheffield was one of very few entries to get three titles correct (two in the right place) in the Amstrad charts. On the ST, **Paul Maxfield** of Rotherham got three in the correct position, and **Khalid Howlader** of Redbridge picked three winners for the Amiga. See the entry form on page 120 for scoring details.

TYCOON

The ACE Stockmarket gets its name from the fact that each month we list the top software companies together with a 'share price' for each one. The Stockmarket tells you which software houses are currently producing the most successful titles. Each company has a THIS MONTH rating, which is calculated according to the reviews its games have received during the current month. A company whose games are all rated highly will have a high THIS MONTH score.

The next rating in the company counter is the SHARE PRICE. This simply tells you how well a company is doing relative to its past performance. If a company gets worse reviews this month than last month, its price will drop. If it gets better reviews, the price rises. Companies who get no reviews at all have their price decreased each month until they get reviewed again.

Associated with the share price is the +/- rating, which simply tells you how much that company's share price has risen or fallen this month.

Finally, there's the company's INDEX RATING. This shows how well a company's games have done this month compared to the average score gained by all the other games reviewed. It's this rating that determines the position of a company in the charts. The average score for ALL games reviewed each month is called the SOFTWARE INDEX and it's printed at the top of the Stockmarket. In other words, if a company's Index rating shows a + figure, that's because its games have scored higher than the industry average during the current month. A minus figure shows that its games have scored less well than the average.

THE 16 BIT CHART

Title	Publisher	Format	Rating
E-Motion	US Gold	Amiga, PC, ST	93.83
Gravity	Image Works	Amiga, ST	91
TV Sports Basketball	Cinemaware	Amiga	90.33
Player Manager	Anco	ST	90.25
Warhead	Activision	Amiga	90.2
Crackdown	US Gold	Amiga, ST	89.5
Pipemania	Empire	Amiga, ST	89.4
Indiana Jones Adventure	US Gold	Amiga, PC, ST	88
X-Out	Rainbow Arts	Amiga	87.5
Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	PC	86.88

Runners-up: *Hound of Shadow* (Electronic Arts) Amiga; *Dragon's Breath* (Palace) Amiga; *Knights of Crystallion* (US Gold) Amiga

E-Motion and *Gravity* fought it out for top slot this month – good to see original games doing so well after all the licences of the past few months.

THE 8-BIT CHART

Vendetta	System 3	C64	92.55
Rainbow Islands	Ocean	C64, CPC, Sp	92.33
Spy vs Spy	Hi-Tec	C64, CPC, Sp	89
Ikari Warriors	Encore	C64, CPC, Sp	87
E-Motion	US Gold	C64, CPC, Sp	86.83
Crackdown	US Gold	C64, Sp	86.25
Biz	Ocean	C64, CPC, Sp	85.06
X-Out	Rainbow Arts	CPC, Sp	81.88
Black Tiger	US Gold	Sp	81.84
Buggy Boy	Encore	C64, Sp	78.42

Runners-up: *Space Harrier II* (Grandslam) C64, Sp; *Joe Blade III* (Players Premier) CPC, Sp; *Fighter Bomber* (Activision) Comm64

Following the highly acclaimed *Myth*, System 3 has come up with another cracker in the form of *Vendetta*, while *Crackdown*, *E-Motion* and *X-Out* have made it into both the 16-bit and 8-bit counter - games that convert well over all formats.

THE MACHINE CHARTS

AMIGA RATINGS

E-Motion	US Gold	91.5
TV Sports Basketball	Cinemaware	90.33
Warhead	Activision	90.2
Pipemania	Empire	88.8
Austerlitz	PSS/Mirrorsoft	88.25

US Gold's unusual game *E-Motion* has made a big impact this month (see PC and C64 ratings, too). Indeed, it's a good month for 'puzzle' style games, with *Pipemania's* gameplay winning over the hacks. And with *Austerlitz* in there as well this is a very impressive Amiga line up for the serious gameplayer.

ATARI ST RATINGS

Player Manager	Anco	90.25
Chaos Strikes Back	FTL/Mirrorsoft	85.25
Kid Gloves	Logotron	82.83
Full Metal Planete	Infogrames	82.75
Conqueror	Rainbow Arts	81.17

Chaos Strikes Back continues to appeal, but *Player Manager* appears, thankfully, to live up to pre-release expectations. Logotron's *Kid Gloves* must have pleased the company as they launch their new Millenium label.

IBM PC-COMPATIBLE RATINGS

E-Motion	US Gold	97.5
Starflight II	Electronic Arts	92
Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	91.5
Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	86.88
Risk	Leisure Genius	85.75
Conflict	16-Blitz	85.75

Huge score for *E-Motion* - if that doesn't make it a 'must-buy' on the PC, nothing will. Electronic Arts is a permanent fixture in PC ratings, and the reviews for *Indy 500* just get better and better.

SPECTRUM RATINGS

General	CCS	90
X-Out	Rainbow Arts	82.75
Joe Blade III	Players Premier	82.5
Invasion Force	CCS	81
Black Tiger	US Gold	81.84

Good to see the scores improve after a disappointing batch of reviews last month. IF you like your programs militaristic, there's a good choice available on the Spectrum this Easter.

COMMODORE 64 RATINGS

Rainbow Islands	Ocean	94
Buggy Boy	Encore	93
Vendetta	System 3	92.55
Crackdown	US Gold	89.5
Ikari Warriors	Encore	86

After an impassioned plea for quality C64 games last month, what do we get but three (count 'em) games averaging over 90%? Good to see *Rainbow islands* out at long last, but does it bode well for the future that two out of the top five rated games are several years old (*Buggy Boy* and *Ikari Warriors*)?

AMSTRAD CPC RATINGS

Fiendish Freddy	Mindscape	83.5
The Biz	Ocean	82.17
P47 Thunderbolt	Firebird	75.34
Wild Streets	Titus	72.75
Joe Blade III	Players Premier	68

Ocean's compilation *The Biz* proves to be excellent value for money, while *Fiendish Freddy* has been well received on all other formats.

TOP CONSOLE GAME SALES IN MARCH 1990

New section starts this month! From now on, we'll be printing the Top Ten Console Sales in each issue. These are the console games that are selling the most copies at Shekhana's London outlets...

Interesting entries this month include Sokoban – a very old game originally produced on MSX and now enjoying a lease of life on the Sega and New Zealand Story – if you thought it was good on your micro, wait till you play the PC Engine version!

SEGA MEGADRIVE TOP 10

1 GOLDEN AXE
2 GHOULS'N'GHOSTS
3 SUPER SHINOBI
4 TATSUJIN
5 LAST BATTLE (North Star)
6 SUPER HANG ON
7 FORGOTTEN WORLDS
8 SUPER REAL BASKETBALL
9 ZOOM
10 SOKOBAN

PC ENGINE TOP 10

1 CHASE HQ
2 SHINOBI
3 SUPER VOLLEYBALL
4 AUTOMIC ROBOKIDD
5 KNIGHT RIDER
6 NEW ZEALAND STORY
7 TIGER ROAD
8 VIGILANTE
9 ALTERED BEAST
10 HEAVY UNIT

GAME BOY TOP 10

1 TETRIS
2 SUPER MARIO LAND
3 GOLF
4 TENNIS
5 LAST BATTLE (North Star)
6 MASTER KARATEKA
7 WORLD BOWLING
8 PINBALL
9 MICKY MOUSE
10 BEACH VOLLEYBALL

LYNX TOP 5

1 CALIFORNIA GAMES
2 BLUE LIGHTNING
3 CHIPS CHALLENGE
4 GATES OF ZENDOCON
5 ELECTROCOP

THE ACE STOCKMARKET – THE TOP 25 SOFTCOS

THIS MONTH'S SOFTWARE INDEX RATING:

72.69

Game reviews were a tad more enthusiastic this month, raising the software index by just over one point. After a quiet couple of months without any new titles, Image Works is back with a vengeance, consistently notching up scores of over 90% for its latest release, *Gravity*, with *Xenon II* still doing the rounds on the PC format. Good football titles still find favour with the reviewing fraternity: Krisalis – the publishing arm of programming team Teque – is a newcomer to the ACE Stock Market, with the timely release of *Manchester United*.

These two companies have earned their high positions largely on the awards given for a single title, but publishers such as Ocean have dozens of games reviewed each month and still manage to come up with an average mark of nearly 85% – no mean achievement.

The four columns show: first, the overall score for this month only, statistically calculated from hundreds of reviews in magazines during the current month; second, the amount of change – up or down – from the previous month. The third is the share price: the company's rating relative to its past performance, while the final column shows how highly each company's titles have scored compared to the software index rating for that month. The software index rating is the overall average mark given by magazine reviewers over all titles.

Publisher	Rating	+ or -	Shares	Index
Image Works	94	n/a	112.66	21.31
Krisalis	91.5	n/a	100*	18.81
Palace	88	+4	104.76	15.31
Hi-Tec	87.67	n/a	100*	14.98
Hit Squad	85.88	n/a	108.76	13.19
CCS	85.5	n/a	100*	12.81
Cinemaware	85.17	n/a	101.22	12.48
Sierra On-Line	84.5	+7.08	109.14	11.81
Ocean	84.36	+4.86	106.11	11.67
Leisure Genius	83.83	+7.08	109.22	11.14
16 Blitz	83.5	+26.14	145.57	10.81
Mindscape	83.25	+5.5	107.07	10.56
PSS/Mirrorsoft	82.75	-1.55	98.16	10.06
US Gold	82.41	+9.74	113.4	9.72
Domark	81.17	+13.42	119.81	8.48
Atlantis	80	n/a	100*	7.31
Microprose	79.96	-1.79	97.81	7.27
Smash 16	79.6	+3.6	104.74	6.91
Infogrames	79.31	+9.82	114.13	6.62
Electronic Arts	78.56	-0.98	98.77	5.87
FTL	77.5	-15.5	83.33	4.81
Microlllusions	77.42	+12.92	120.03	4.73
Starbyte	77.21	n/a	136.24	4.52
Melbourne House	76.7	n/a	100*	4.01
Rainbow Arts	76.55	+4.67	106.5	3.86

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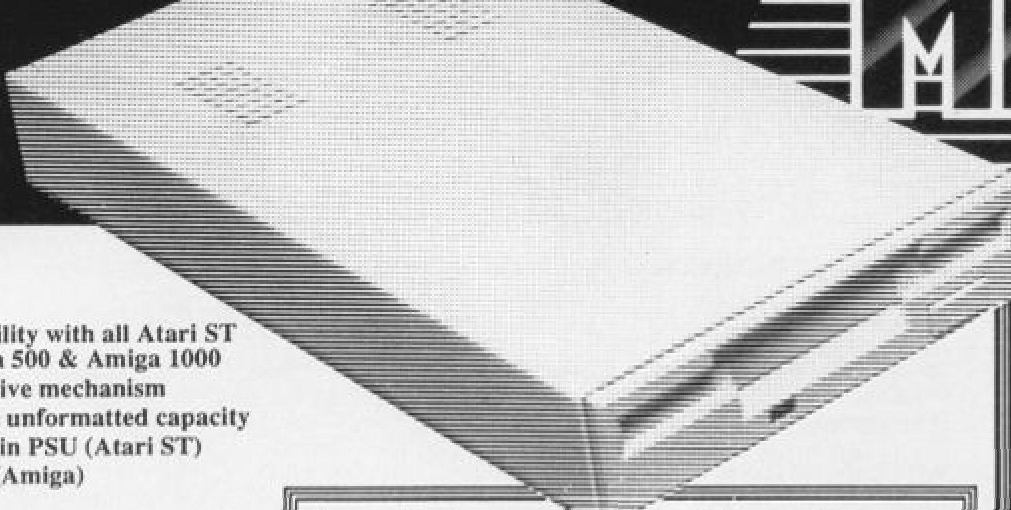

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ACE CLASSICS

SOMETIMES YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO FACE UP TO THE TRUTH. YOUR SOFTWARE COLLECTION IS GETTING YOU DOWN, YOUR DOG'S SICK, YOUR FRIENDS ARE CONVINCED IT WAS YOU THAT LOST THE WINNING POOLS COUPON, YOUR MOTHER HAS DECIDED YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR IMAGE, AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND (OR BOYFRIEND) HAS JUST BECOME A MISSIONARY... THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT...GO OUT AND GET A NEW GAME. AND TO MAKE SURE YOU REALLY SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE, HERE'S A LIST OF GAMES YOU'VE JUST GOT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION.

ATF

Digital Integration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk● Spectrum £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent combat/flight simulator that's a bit of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.

★ ACE RATED 956 - SPECTRUM

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged combat routines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and represents excellent value for money.

★ ACE RATED 920

BATTLETECH

Infocom, PC £29.95, ST

Battletech features some incredible cartoon sequences, arcade style action, role play and strategy. In short a complete, full game. A brilliant RPG purchase even though it missed out on an Ace rating.

★ ACE RATED 801

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● PC £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.

★ ACE RATED 902

BOMBER

Activision ● Spectrum £14.99cs £19.99dk ● C64 £14.99cs £19.99dk ● Amstrad £14.99cs £19.99dk ● ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £34.99dk

Vector Grafix has spent a long time on this one – and it certainly shows. The game gets the balance just right between convincing simulation and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

★ ACE RATED 925

BONE-CRUNCHER

Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs11.95dk ● Amiga £14.95

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a boulderdash rip-off. However there are a number of innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.

★ ACE RATED 948 – AMIGA

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. Enormously good fun, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

★ ACE RATED 958

COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CDS ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk

Rummy-like oriental game of stratagy and chance. A tutor program and a short manual make this an easy to use and highly entertaining piece of software for veterans and novices alike..

★ ACE RATED 937 - C64

CONFLICT EUROPE

Mirrorsoft, ST 24.99, Amiga £24.99, PC TBA

The 16 bit progression of Theatre Europe. Lots of extra graphical and sound effects. The computer controlled intelligence was marginally sophisticated but still enough to give a challenging game. The correct balance between strategy and exitement throughout. Great for beginners and intermediate players.

★ ACE RATED 882

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a tricky game to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become mesmerised by the thing. If you ain't got a 1Mb Archie though – forget it!

★ ACE RATED 931

CORRUPTION

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● C64 £17.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk

This tale of insider dealings, infidelity and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventurers who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a nail-biting plot makes this a terrific game that grips from the start.

★ ACE RATED 920

DARK SIDE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The second game using the Freescape programming system, which sets more of an arcade challenge. The 3-D graphics are again superb as are the tasks and puzzles.

★ ACE RATED 915 - AMSTRAD

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Vortex ● C64 £9.99cs ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● ST £19.95dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a number of cells that are on screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive.

★ ACE RATED 906 – ST

DUNGEON MASTER

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

Quoted as being a "milestone in Advanced Computer Entertainment", *Dungeon Master* offers 14 levels, loads of spells, atmospheric graphics and sound. All going to make *Dungeon Master* one of the best roleplaying adventures to have appeared on any machine.

★ ACE RATED 949

ELIMINATOR

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.99cs £12.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Graphically wonderful roadway blast-em-up by John Phillips, which will twist your joystick inside-out. It'll even have you driving on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addiction level's so great you'll keep coming back for more.

★ ACE RATED 904

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

Digital Integration ● ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

This took nine person years to develop, and you can feel that quality of work when playing it – it's one of the most realistic flight sims on the market. If you are a connoisseur of flight simulators then this is an essential addition to your collection.

★ ACE RATED 970

FALCON

Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft ● ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● MAC

If you really want the terror, exhilaration and sheer everything-happens-at-once confusion of combat flying, this game delivers. Make no mistake, this game is the real thing. An

essential purchase for fast-jet fans.
★ ACE RATED 945

INGRID'S BACK

Level 9 ● Atari ST
£19.95dk

A great follow-up to *Gnome Ranger*. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.
★ ACE RATED 920

M1 TANK PLATOON

Microprose ● PC
£39.99dk

This is a welcome break from flight-sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most compulsive nitpicker happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamester. A winner.
★ ACE RATED 926

NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99 dk● Atari ST £14.99 dk

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.
★ ACE RATED 943 - C64

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Ocean ● Spectrum £8.95cs, C64 £9.95cs, Amstrad £9.95cs, ST £19.99, Amiga £24.99
Although pipped at the post in a head to head with Rainbow Islands, New Zealand Story is not a game to be ruled out. It is immense fun to play, provides lots of varied action across many levels. Definitely worth checking out.
★ ACE RATED 875

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST
£19.99dk

A magnificent *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids – great stuff!
★ ACE RATED 969

POWERDROME

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST
£24.95dk

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you enthralled for months to come. It may not be terribly easy to get straight into but it's well worth persevering with. You'll be playing this for months.
★ ACE RATED 925

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Exxos ● Atari ST
£24.95dk ● Amiga
£24.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both audio and visual. The consistently good gameplay ensures you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to get the hang off, but master it and you'll be pleased you persevered.
★ ACE RATED 912

QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.95cs
£14.95dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.
★ ACE RATED 934 - C64

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Ocean, Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk, C64 £9.99cs $14.99dk, Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk, ST £24.99, Amiga £24.99

The sequel to Bubble Bobble is nothing short of fantastic. The graphics and sound are superb, as is the gameplay.
One of the best (and cutest arcade conversions of the year that should not be missed.
★ ACE RATED 934

RVF

Microstyle, ST £24.99, Amiga £29.99

RVF offers a near endless supply of fast paced bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider giving the bike a push start after a crash.
An excellent mix of arcade and simulation.
★ ACE RATED 915

SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95 cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clean brain and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.
★ ACE RATED 963 - AMIGA

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the solid 3D treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. You've got a large task to complete and there's plenty of Egron's to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration that stands head above the competition.
★ ACE RATED 927 - ST

SPIDERTRONIC

Ere International ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured panels in the correct order. The built-in construction set means you'll be knocking out your own levels till the cows come home.
★ ACE RATED 903

SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-priced release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £1.99!
★ ACE RATED 919 - C64

STAR TREK V

Mindscape ● PC £34.99dk ● MAC £34.99dk

This is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. The gameplay provides absorbing and challenging hours of fun. A must for Trekkies and an entertaining space strategy /simulator for everyone else.
★ ACE RATED 930

SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk Amstrad £9.99cs Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game.
★ ACE RATED 907

TETRIS

Mirrorsoft ● Spectrum £8.99 cs ● C64 £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £12.99 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● IBM PC £19.99dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.
★ ACE RATED 959 - C64

THEATRE EUROPE

PSS, Spectrum £9.95cs, C64 £0.95cs £14.95dk, Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk

The perfect game for 8 bit owners who go green with envy when they look at Conflict Europe. Theatre Europe is the forerunner to the excellent 16 bit game. The graphics and overall play are not as sophisticated, but on the whole it still is one heck of a game.
★ ACE RATED 915

TIME AND MAGIK

Mandarin ● Spectrum £14.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● PC £19.99dk

This compilation of the Level 9 games, *Lords Of Time, Red Moon* and *The Price Of Magik* have been re-vamped with better parsing, bigger vocabularies and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.
★ ACE RATED 919

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The third game using the Freescape system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In total eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930's trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventurers who love puzzles, the Freescape system is a godsend.
★ ACE RATED 907 - AMSTRAD

ULTIMA V

OriginSystems/Microprose ● C64 £24.95dk ● PC £29.95 ● ST/Amiga to be announced

Astonishing level of detail in this role-playing influenced epic. Travel round Britannia trashing the opposition and learning the magical, tactical, and geographical secrets that will enable you to defeat the forces of evil far underground. Superb romp, great lasting interest, and tough challenges galore.
★ ACE RATED 928

UMS

Rainbird, ST £24.95, PC £24.95, Macintosh £34.95, Amiga £24.95

Probably the greatest war game to date. UMS' unique 3D systems enables the creation of almost any battle in history. As well as a very sophisticated computer opponents yet. On top of this are add on scenarios and a very neat contruction kit to keep you going for even longer. An essential purchase
★ ACE RATED 907

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Firebird (16 and 8-bit versions) Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Some 8-bit versions under development

A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timelessly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions.
★ ACE RATED 981

★

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CHART TOPPERS TOP 30

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Batman the Movie	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Cabal	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Chase HQ	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
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Footballer of the Year II	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Forgotten Worlds	6.99	9.99	6.99	9.99	10.99
Ghostbusters 2	7.99	N/A	7.99	7.99	10.99
Ghouls and Ghosts	6.99	9.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
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Indy Jones Last Crusade	6.99	9.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Kick Off	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Stunt Car Racer	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Super Wonderboy	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	10.99
Untouchables	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Turbo Outrun	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Powerdrift	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	10.99
Gazzas Soccer	5.99	N/A	5.99	5.99	9.99
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Double Dragon II	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Myth	6.99	N/A	8.99	6.99	10.99
Beach Volley	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
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Rainbow Islands	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
P47 Thunderbolt	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
World Championship Boxing Manager	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	N/A
Black Tiger	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	10.99
X-Out	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99

CLASSIC COLLECTION

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Heroes of the Lance	6.99	N/A	7.99	7.99	12.99
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Football Director	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	N/A
Football Director II	12.99	12.99	N/A	N/A	12.99
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Emlyn Hughes Int Soccer	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Chuck Yeagers (AFT)	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
The National	6.99	N/A	N/A	6.99	N/A
Shinobi	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Scape Ghost	9.99	9.99	9.99	9.99	9.99
Silent Service	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	10.99
F15 Strike Eagle	6.99	N/A	6.99	6.99	10.99
New Zealand Story	6.99	10.99	6.99	6.99	10.99
Jack Nicklaus Golf	6.99	12.99	6.99	6.99	12.99
Trivial Pursuits	5.99	N/A	5.99	5.99	7.99

CHART TOPPERS TOP 30

	ST	AMIGA	PC 51/4	PC31/2
Ghouls and Ghosts	13.99	16.99	N/A	N/A
Batman the Movie	13.99	9.99	N/A	N/A
Xenon 2 Megablast	16.99	16.99	16.99	16.99
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THIS MONTH *ACE* GIVES YOU THE LOWDOWN ON THE LATEST AND GREATEST RELEASES TO HIT THE SHOPS. THESE ARE ALL THE ACE RATED GAMES THAT WE HAVE REVIEWED OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS. WE WERE VERY IMPRESSED BY ALL OF THEM, AND WE KNOW YOU WILL BE TOO. SO IF YOUR SOFTWARE COLLECTION IS LOOKING A LITTLE DOWN IN THE MOUTH , THESE ARE THE GAMES YOU SHOULD BE LOOKING AT TO MAKE YOUR MICRO MEANINGFUL, YOUR NIBBLES BYTE SIZE, YOUR JOYSTICK JOYFUL, YOUR MOUSE MIGHTY, AND YOUR DISK DRIVE DELERIOUS. ALL OF THE GAMES COVERED HERE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL RETAILER.. SO SCAN OUR LISTING, GET YOUR DOSH OUT, AND START HAVING A GOOD TIME AGAIN. FILE UNDER 'ESSENTIAL'!

BATMAN

US Gold ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk

The game of the movie. Michael Keaton put up a pretty good show as the caped crusader in the film, and his digital counterpart isn't too bad either. There are no less than five sections to the game. The first, Axis Chemical Plant, and last, Gotham City Cathedral, are superb 2D platform games in which our hero has to swing around on his batrope bumping off the villains before they get him. There is also a brain game in the Batcave and two excellent 3D games set in the Batmobile and Batwing respectively. A must for all DC comic fans.

★ ACE RATING 922

BOMBER

Activision ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Spectrum £14.99cs £19.99dk ● Amstrad £14.99cs £19.99dk ● C64 £14.99cs £19.99dk ● PC £34.99dk

A flight sim employing fast solid vector graphics with more bells and whistles than most similar programs. There are a total of fourteen fighter bombers from around the world featured in the program. If you get bored of the standard forward cockpit view then it is possible to select one of a variety of out of cockpit views. The PC version is an experience not to be missed (providing you have a 286 or 386 machine with VGA or better), but for all the other versions – try before you buy!

★ ACE RATING 925

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

FTL/Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga TBA

The long awaited sequel to *Dungeon Master*. If you have already played through the first program you can use your existing characters, otherwise there is another hall of mirrors you can select from. *Chaos* has a similar feel to *Dungeon Master*, but is much tougher. There are also some new features thrown in like a character editor, and help oracle (very handy). If you haven't played *Dungeon Master*, then play that first before making a definite date with this game.

★ ACE RATING 945

CONQUEROR

Rainbow Arts ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk

An arcade style tank sim which makes use of a 3D graphics system based around the one David Braben developed for *Zarch*. There are three types of game available: arcade, attrition, and strategy. All three are best played with two joysticks *Battlezone* style, but there are control options to suit every set-up. A definite buy for tank buffs.

★ ACE RATING 925

DAMOCLES

Novagen ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC TBA

This unusual combination between flight sim and adventure game, the sequel to the well received *Mercenary*, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been well worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here.

★ ACE RATING 935

FUTURE WARS

Palace ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC TBA

A totally mouse-driven graphic adventure from French developers Delphine. You are cast as a mild-mannered office window cleaner who gets caught up in an alien plot to conquer Earth in the 43rd century. The graphics and background music are very striking and the game is made very accessible by the lack of text entry. There is enough of a challenge here to keep most adventurers happy for some time. A delightful game.

★ ACE RATING 910

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

US Gold ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk

The cute sequel to Capcom's hit coin-op *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. Brave many difficult horizontally scrolling levels in one of the toughest arcade games to emerge for some time. You must guide the little knight through many waves of cute sprites to rescue the princess. Gripping stuff, but not for the faint hearted.

★ ACE RATING 905

GRAVITY

Imageworks ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC TBA

Deep space strategy unlike anything you've ever seen before. The universe is being invaded by the alien outies who are attempting to turn all the suns in the universe into black holes. Meanwhile you must create as many inhabitable systems as possible. The game makes use of the principle of Einstein-Minkowski fourspace - this makes for some very unusual graphics. When you add programmable drones and travel via black holes you have yourself a highly original and compelling game.

★ ACE RATING 930

HARD DRIVIN'

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A very competent conversion of the Tengen coin-op. Drive your Ferrari round

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either a speed track or a stunt track complete with a loop and open bridge to leap. The coin-op scored on it's super fast solid vector graphics, and these have been faithfully reproduced in the computer versions. A must buy.

★ ACE RATING 937

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts ● PC £24.95

The ultimate racing game. *Indy 500* uses state of the art solid vector graphics, which really add something to the high speed action. As in Activision's *Bomber* there are a variety of out-of-cockpit views to select from. The realistic handling of the cars will have you coming back to this game time and time again.

★ ACE RATING 935

INTERPHASE

Imageworks ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk PC £24.99dk

A 3D extravaganza supposedly inspired by William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*. It is set in a hi-tech future. Your task is to guide a female saboteur to the heart of the Dreamtrack Corporation by interacting with a strange 3D environment. The game is very weird and very compelling. It is also very hard - don't expect to get through this one in a hurry.

★ ACE RATING 915

KNIGHTS OF LEGEND

Origin/Mindscape ● PC TBA

Role Playing at it's best. An expandable game set in the medieval land of Ashtalarea. There are twenty-four quests to complete, or you can simply enjoy exploring. The program stands out because of its attention to detail. There are no less than forty different algorithms to decide how and when an enemy retreats for instance. Impressive stuff.

★ ACE RATING 945

M1 TANK PLATOON

Microprose ● PC £39.95

The ultimate tank sim. Not only are there realistic 3D vector graphic sequences with a hell of a lot of atmosphere, but you also have to think carefully about choice of platoons, men, and the way you tackle each scenario. Microprose had to call on the Freedom of Information act to get the info it needed for the game. The result is one of the most frighteningly accurate tank sims we've seen.

★ ACE RATING 926

MYTH

System 3 ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of it's size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

★ ACE RATING 925

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

Ocean ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99 ● Spectrum £9.99cs ● Amstrad £9.99cs ● C64 £9.99cs

Eminently successful conversion of the hot coin-op hit *Operation Wolf*. Grab you Uzi and shoot your way through hordes of terrorists to rescue the luckless hostages. There are new 3D scenarios this time to add to the frantic lead spitting of the original. Best played with a light gun, but a mouse will suffice if you don't have one. Joystick or keyboard controls don't really cope however.

★ ACE RATING 927

PIPEMANIA

Entertainment International ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.95dk ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk I PC £19.95dk ● Macintosh £24.95dk ● Archimedes £24.95dk ● MSX £9.95cs £14.95dk ● BBC/Electron £9.95cs £14.95dk

The game that proves plumbing can be fun. You must construct a continuous length of pipe from several sections before the flooz escapes. The action is just as compelling as games like *Tetris* and will have you burning the midnight oil in an attempt to beat the odds. It is available for practically every machine, so there is no excuse for not owning a copy.

★ ACE RATING 910

PLAYER MANAGER

Anco ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95 ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95 ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk

Kick Off with a management/strategy element. The game is completely icon driven, making it easy to get into. The management detail is superb, right down to planning in-match tactics. And for the match you can either watch from the sidelines or join in with the *Kick Off* style fun yourself.

★ ACE RATING 920

PRO TENNIS TOUR

Ubi Soft/Blue Byte ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● C64 £12.99cs £16.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £16.99dk ● PC £29.99dk

The best tennis game yet. The control method works really well, although the standard of the computer players is good, so you'll have to put in a lot of practice. There is a choice of grass, concrete, clay, and indoor courts, as well as comprehensive practice options. A good way of spending a few hours while you are waiting for Wimbledon.

★ ACE RATING 900

QUARTZ

Firebird ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

A game inspired by practically every game ever written. Beginning with an *Asteroids* style sequence set in the lattice work of a crystal you go onto fight through a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up level, a 3D meteor storm and a *Xenon II* type vertical shoot 'em up. Great unclassifiable stuff.

★ ACE RATING 905

STAR TREK V

Mindscape ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Macintosh £34.99dk ● PC £34.99dk

The game of the movie in which you must recover the beleaguered Enterprise. The game is made by its superb (EGA) graphics. There are several excellent animations throughout the game, which is an unusual mixture of strategy and adventure elements. A game to keep you absorbed for some time.

★ ACE RATING 930

THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Lucasfilm ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk

World War II air combat relived in this superlative flight sim. You have the opportunity to fly a variety of WWII craft from the Spitfire to the Hurricane. A neat option is the camera which records your flight and can be replayed to assess your performance.

★ ACE RATING 933

TOWER OF BABEL

Microprose ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

An imaginative 3D puzzler from Pete Cooke – the man who brought you *Tau Ceti*. You control three robots, a zapper, grabber, and pusher. They must be used to complete a specific task on a number of futuristic levels of a tower. This involves working your way past various nasty obstructions deliberately designed to impede your progress. This game will have you burning the midnight oil as you attempt for the nth time to get past a particularly tricky level.

★ ACE RATING 930

VENDETTA

System 3 ● C64 £9.99cs £12.99dk

A great arcade adventure that really pushes the C64 to it's limits. You must fight your way past the terrorists to defuse a bomb, and rescue the professor and his daughter. But while you are on the terrorists' tails the police are on yours. Most of the action takes place against an isometric 3D background, but there is also an excellent driving section to rival many full-scale driving games.

★ ACE RATING 912

VETTE

Mirrorsoft/Spectrum Holobyte ● Atari ST TBA ● Amiga TBA ● PC £29.99

High speed racing round the streets of San Francisco in one of four Corvettes on offer. The superb 3D colour graphics in the game give a great sense of the wind in your hair as you roar down precariously steep streets desperately trying to avoid pedestrians and other vehicles. Realistic and lots of fun, this game, from the people who brought you *Falcon*, will have you hooked.

★ ACE RATING 926

X-OUT

Rainbow Arts ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk

Possibly the best horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up ever written. There's everything in this game any trigger happy chap could want: well animated sprites, pretty backgrounds, lots of speed, a bagfull of weaponry for the taking, loadsabonuses, and plenty of challenge – what more could you want?

★ ACE RATING 939

THE *ACE* SOFTWARE GUIDE

Next month the *ACE* software guide will be back, having been throughly updated to ensure that you always have the up to the minute consumer information you require. All categories will be covered, and all software featured will be available!

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PINK PUZZLES

SOLUTION TO MARCH '90 PRIZE PUZZLE

'VALENTINE' equals 967521025. This has a square root of **31105**.

The smallest number which can be represented by the word VALENTINE is 102345643 and the largest 987654356. As each different letter represents a different digit and similar letters stand for the same digits, the number we are after has the last two digits also occurring in the middle of the number (as represented by the letters N and E.) From the two limits given above we can calculate that the square root must lie in the range 10117 to 31622. This is the limit given to the loop at line 100 of the listing. From this sequence of numbers the associated squares are computed, this value being converted to string format. Once in the form of a string we are able to check the individual digits. For example, the answer to fit the fourth digit must be the same as the ninth, and the fifth digit must match the eighth. In addition, the first seven digits (as represented by the letters 'VALENTI' must all be different. The double loops F and G check this by comparing each digit against the rest, a flag being set to 1 if a match is found. Should this happen the values of F and G are also reset to their upper limits to terminate the test as the discovery of a single matching pair means that there is no need to test any further. Only if the flag remains set at zero is the current value printed out.

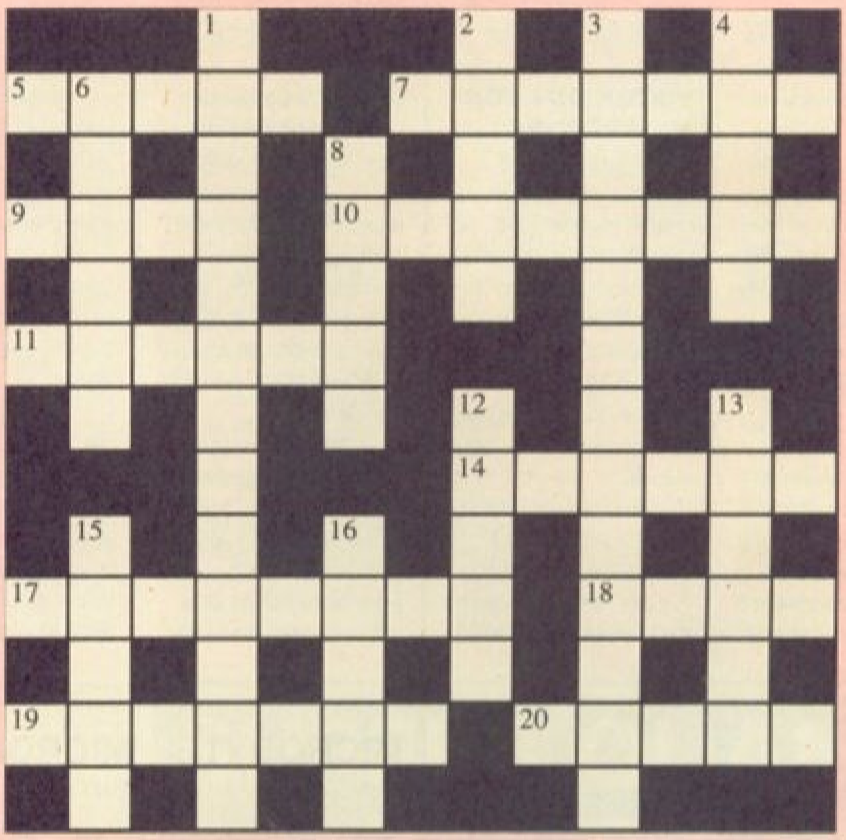
Now, this results in more than one possibility (actually 14 which may seem appropriate as Valentine's Day is February 14th!). However, the problem stated that the correct value for the letter 'E' was known and this knowledge enabled a single answer to be found. By scanning the final digit of the nine-digit number it can be seen that only if this value were given as '5' would a single value result, so this must have been the value originally given in the problem.

```
100 FOR N=10117 to 31622
110 S=N*N: S$=STR$(S)
120 IF MID$(S$,4,1)<>MID$(S$,9,1) THEN 200
130 IF MID$(S$,5,1)<>MID$(S$,8,1) THEN 200
140 V$=LEFT$(S$,7):FLAG=0
150 FOR F=1 TO 6:FOR G=F+1 TO 7
160 IF MID$(V$,F,1)=MID$(V$,G,1) THEN
    FLAG=1:F=7:G=7
170 NEXT G:NEXT F
180 IF FLAG=1 THEN 200
190 PRINT N;"  ";S$;"  ";MID$(S$,4,1)
200 NEXT N
```

The winners are **S & T. Carter** of **Coldingham**, **Berwickshire**.

PINK CROSSWORD

MAY '90



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MAY '90 CROSSWORD
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ACROSS CLUES

5. To all around the island (5).
7. Van gone around to Mercenary's house. (7)
9. Car computer. (4)
10. Cub troop playing a game. (8)
11. In Malaga lax youth eats Milky Way. (6)
14. The way to a meeting place. (6)
17. Software house as at date of formation. (4,4)
18. Black in pink-yellow setting. (4)
19. Am putting game back on computer. (7)
20. One driven undergound in Paris. (5)

DOWN CLUES

1. John Lowe's final game. (8,5)
2. Woo the judge and jury. (5)
3. Adder's time for playing on computer. (3,2,3,5)
4. This game's a gas! (5)
6. Ian apt to get upset by game (3-3)
8. Psygnosis game telling heartless story by unknown. (5)
12. A one-time Yugoslav leader about to form a software house (5)
13. System 3's game elephant. (6)
15. Gamma blast resulting in molten rock. (5)
16. Secret society game from Ocean. (5)

Send your entry to:

ACE May '90 Crossword
30-32 Farringdon Lane
LONDON
EC1R 3AU

ACE DEALS

CHECK OUT THE SPECIAL BARGAINS AVAILABLE AT LOCAL DEALERS THIS MONTH

Happy hour At City Software in Liverpool, you should pick your moment to visit the store with care - the store is holding 'Happy Hours' throughout the week when you will get 20% off any software purchase.

The catch is that City Software chooses the times of its Happy Hour each day more or less at random. Choosing a likely time to get your discount is largely a matter of luck. However, ACE has turned detective and can give you a few hints. Happy Hours will occur at some time between 10.00am and noon and then between 2.00-5.00pm during the week (and will be beginning regularly on Saturdays too sometime during April), and if Happy Hour is during the afternoon one day, then it will be during the morning the next day and vice versa.

There's also a Walkman to be won each week at City Software. Throughout April, every purchase will give you a raffle ticket, and at the end of the week a ticket is drawn for the prize Walkman. City Software is on Lime Street

WATCH OUT FOR MICROPROSE

Microbyte's Collect'n' Select scheme, where you receive voucher-style stamps towards a selection of free gifts when you buy software from any of Microbyte's nine outlets, is in full swing (see ACE 31), and now you can get double stamps on some purchases.

8-bit owners haven't been forgotten, either. Throughout April, if you buy any titles published by the Microprose stable - that's Rainbird, Micro Style, or Microprose itself - you will also get - free of charge - a Microprose wrist watch.

Microbyte customers will also get the chance of a day out with Microprose including a flight in the Microprose plane. Ask at Microbyte stores for details.

Live in the Humberside area? Why not pop down to Pasture Road in Goole and have a look round the new Microbyte store which has just opened? Better still, go in clutching a copy of ACE, and just might persuade the staff to give you some freebies.

Still in the north of England, the Computer Shops chain is planning a grand Easter Egg promotion with a number of software titles. Details were still being finalised as we went to press, so ask at your local Computershop (store list below) how to take part.

Computer Shops has still got some Accolade baseball jackets to be won in conjunction with *Blue Angels*, and is just beginning a simple trivia-style competition with a wealth of prizes.

Answer three simple questions correctly and you'll be in with a chance of winning the big prize - original artwork from Xenomorph, signed and framed. The runners-up prizes are equally juicy: Star Trek videos, and tee-shirts.

And Computer Shops has asked us not to forget that the world-famous Ocean pens are still available - free with Rainbow Islands, F29 Retaliator, Lost Patrol and Ivanhoe (subject to game availability).

City Software, Liverpool, is on Lime Street for software, hardware, and accessories (joysticks, printer ribbons, dust covers, blank disks, etc).

There are Microbyte stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkgate, Wakefield; the Metro Centre, Gateshead; the Greenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkgate Centre, Bradford; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham; the County Arcade, Leeds; and Pasture Road, Goole.

You can find Computer Shop outlets in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; Newcastle, Leeds, Preston, Sunderland, Stockton and Nottingham. Also part of the Computer Shop chain are the two Games Store outlets in Carlisle and Middlesbrough, which stock role-playing games as well as computer software.

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock. We do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at presstime, but ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

ATTENTION DEALERS!

Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE... and we'll tell everybody else.

MICROBYTE + MICROPROSE
PRESENT

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ANYONE PURCHASING ST OR AMIGA **MIDWINTER** FROM ANY OF THE **MICROBYTE** STORES LISTED BELOW WILL RECIEVE EITHER A **FREE DUSTCOVER** FOR THEIR COMPUTER OR **DOUBLE STAMPS** FOR THEIR **COLLECT "N" SELECT** CARD (THATS **10** STAMPS!)

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ACE DIARY

THIS MONTH'S RELEASES AND EVENTS FOR ENTRY IN YOUR LEATHER-BOUND, GOLD-CLASPED FILOFAX

APRIL

Sunday 8

Palm Sunday

Formula One Grand Prix, San Marino.

FA Cup semi-finals: 12.00pm Crystal Palace vs Liverpool at Villa Park

3.30pm Manchester United vs Oldham at Maine Road

Week's releases at a glance

Domark: Klax (all formats except PC) Tengen conversion released as the coin-op goes into the arcades. Puzzle game hoping to emulate the success of Tetris.

Castle Master (all formats) Incentive-developed game utilising the Freescape 3D graphics system - being published by Domark.

Monday 9

Anniversary of Concorde's maiden flight, from Bristol to Fairford in Gloucestershire, in 1969.

Tuesday 10

Passover (Pesach) in Israeli and Jewish communities.

Wednesday 11

Thursday 12

Maundy Thursday - traditionally when the Queen hands out the Maundy money to deserving cases.

Cricket: England vs West Indies. Fifth test begins in Antigua.

Friday 13

Good Friday

Snooker: Embassy World Professional Championship begins at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

Saturday 14

Easter Saturday

Sunday 15

Easter Sunday

Week's releases at a glance

Digital Integration: Advanced Tactical Fighter (Amiga) Final version of the arcade-style flight game, originally out on 8-bits some years now.

Virgin: Dan Dare III (all formats) Return of the hero with the jaw like a crowbar. Already reviewed favourably.

World Trophy Soccer (all formats) You'll find a lot of footie games coming out this summer with the words 'World' and 'Soccer' somewhere in the title, curiously enough. This is Virgin's effort, a stand-perspective playing (as opposed to management) sim.

Electronic Arts: LHX Attack Chopper (PC) Flight sim based on a US plane that doesn't yet officially exist!

Readysoft: Dragon's Lair (PC) Laser disc quality graphics, but more of a cartoon to watch and admire than a game to get involved in.

Titus: Dark Century (all formats) A UK representative for Titus claimed last autumn that Dark Century could well be "the surprise Christmas number one". Now it's out just in time for Easter.

Empire: Sleeping Gods Lie (PC)

Hewson: Fourth Dimension (C64, CPC, Spectrum) Compilation comprising - on C64 - Insects in Space, Cyberdine Warrior, Mission Impossabubble, and Head the Ball; on Spectrum, Klimax, Head the Ball, Kraal, and Super Cup; on CPC, Slayer, Super Cup, Harobotics and Anarchy. A mixed bag.

Loriciels/US Gold: Sherman M4 (CPC, ST, Amiga, PC) Unsurprisingly, a tank simulation, recreating battles from the second world war. Rated at 820 (ST) and 825 (PC) in ACE 31.

Psygnosis: Matrix Marauders (ST, Amiga) Hard and fast arcade action in a scenario reminiscent of the 'grids' of Japanese board games.

Monday 16

Easter Mon. (Bank holiday)

Tuesday 17

Wednesday 18

Thursday 19

Friday 20

Saturday 21

Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II, 1926.

Anniversary of the introduction of the £1 coin in 1983.

Sunday 22

The tenth London Marathon will be run.

Week's releases at a glance

Domark: Klax (PC) See above for comment.

Ocean: Shadow Warrior (all formats)

Empire: World Cup Compilation 90 (all formats except PC) Hot on the heels of Virgin, here's another World Cup cash-in. Empire's very own Gazza is deemed too new for inclusion, but you do get Kick Off - superlative on 16-bit - Tracksuit Manager, International Soccer and Gary Lineker's Hotshots. It's to be hoped all these World Cup games make it into the shops before the home teams are packing their bags to come home.

Grandslam: Dragon Fight (ST, Amiga) Complex role playing game.

US Gold: Legend of Billy Bolder (ST, Amiga)

Psygnosis: Killing Game Show (Amiga) Take part in an intergalactic TV games show where unsuccessful contestants are killed off rather than suffer the embarrassment of losing on telly.

Image Works: Bloodwych (CPC, Spectrum) Highly acclaimed 16-bit title makes it on to the older machines.

Monday 23

St George's Day. English patron saint and dragon-slayer extraordinaire, St George exists more in legend than in solid historical fact. He was probably martyred in Palestine around the beginning of the fourth century AD. The incident with the maiden and the dragon is generally supposed to have taken place in Silene in Libya - how he came to be adopted as England's own saint is not at all clear, but in 1415, St George's Day was named as one of the most important festivals in the calendar.

Tuesday 24

Which Computer? show opens at Birmingham's NEC. Strictly business only.

Wednesday 25

Thursday 26

Friday 27

Saturday 28

Sunday 29

Littlewoods Cup Final, Wembley: Oldham vs Nottingham Forest

Week's releases at a glance

Domark: Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters (al formats except PC) SF comic inspired game licensed from US publisher Broderbund.

Electronic Arts: Powerdrome (PC) Imperium (ST, Amiga)

Hewson: Netherworld (PC) International Championship Wrestling (Amiga)

Empire: Escape from Singe's Castle (Amiga) Dragon's Lair sequel/prequel.

Monday 30

MAY

Tuesday 1

Wednesday 2

Anniversary of the sinking of the Argentinian ship the General Belgrano, during the Falklands conflict.

Thursday 3

Friday 4

Saturday 5

Sunday 6

London numbers change. 01-code becomes 071- (inner London) or 081- (outer London).

Monday 7

May Day Bank Holiday

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ACE READERS' PAGES

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OPUS PC3 Turbo, IBM compatible, 14" EGA colour monitor, Floppy and Hard disk, clock, manuals. £680. Tel: 01-281-0633.

ST Games : Top Titles from £3 SAE for list pro sound gold only £30. Ian, 26 Lowdell Close, Yiewsley, Middx. UB7 8AZ.

CBM 64 and Printer and all the leads. Lots of games which includes : Robocop, Armalyte, Double Dragon. All for just £250. Tel: 0442 832120. Ask for Alex. After 6pm.

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ATARI 1040 STFM loads of games magazines + joystick £325, discovery cartridge £150. Contact W.Hessey, 30 Helens Close, Blackpool. Tel: 0253 44961.

SELLING PC ENGINE (Pal) with 10 games worth £550 sell for £400 or sell games £25 each. Tel: Mark 888-3001.

SEGA M/SYSTEM, 2 joypads, 1 joystick, 12 games including, Outrun, Afterburner, Rambo, Wonderboy 2, Light Phaser, Maps, tips,worth £400, sell for £190 ono. Tel :01-803-6463.

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ATARI 520 ST, £400 worth software, joystick, mouse, unwanted Christmas present. Games include, Xennon 2, Beach Volley, Baal, Total cost £700. Sell £300. Tel : 0245 320923.

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C64 Disk Drive, blank disks over £1000 of games. C2N, joystick, mags, boxed. Sell for £350 ono. Tel : Rotherham 545560.

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ATARI 520 ST, joystick, mouse,£1100 of games and P.D. eg. Stos, Quantom paint, Untouchables, Falcon, Rocket Ranger. All for £499 ono. Phone 0707 59908.

ST ORIGINALS, Populous, Daley Tompsons OC, Star Wars, and Goldrunner. £3-£10. Tel: 0922 22808 and ask for Jack after 4pm.

SPECTRUM + 3 used one year only just serviced over 50 best disks and tapes £200. Tel: 01-892-8754.

AMSTRAD CPC 464 Colour monitor with 110 great games, including Untouchables, Rambo ect..Tel : Paul after 5.30pm on 0706-353-586. £275 ono.

SYNTH for Sale. Korg 707 Professional performing Synth with case, transformer, and leads. Worth £600. Sell for £200 ono. Tel: Bristol 698914.

AMIGA Never been used box never opened. Unwanted gift all invoices and guarantees. Quick sale £360. Tel: 0860 664824 anytime.

ATARI ST, mouse and joystick, £750 worth of games, all boxed. TV modulator. Price £450 ono. Tel: 0992 442454 after 7pm.

ATARI 520 STFM, £800 games, mouse and mat, lockable disk box, 5 blanks, scart cable, software library membership, plus mags, £255. Tel: 0724 424095.

ATARI STFM 1 meg drive, boxed, incl, joystick, manual, £430 software, Falcon STOS, Xenon 2 £265. Tel: 0763 242288. 6pm ask for Dan.

ATARI STFM 2 joysticks, mouse, bextender £400 of software 8 months old. Price £200-£230 Tel: 946-2389 after 5pm. 1 Meg.

COMMODORE 64C, Datasette and joystick. Very good condition all boxed with £50 of games included, only £100. Tel: 01-360-3742.

AMSTRAD CPC464, Mono monitor. TV Modulator. £300 of games including Batman, Dragon Ninja Etc.. Joystick. £130 ono. Tel: 0703 455646.

ATARI STFM Computer mouse and mat, £200 worth of games, mags will sell for £300. Tel : 291-2838.

SELLING English and Hong Kong Nintendos with 15 games and Japanese Converter for £350. Contact Ben on 315-8683 after 7pm.

SPECTRUM 128K +3 £300 games, 2 joysticks, Tape player, leads, 40 mags still boxed 3 year guarantee. Tel: Steve 0933 55965 for further details.

COMMODORE 64 + 1541 2 disk drive. Good condition. Includes leads £600 worth of software and hardware. Quick sale. Tel: 01-340-0655.

VIDEO CAMERA, B/W Survielance camera £50. CCD Colour video camera £100. Both as new, with lens. Suit Digitiser. Tel: 061-798-0456.

Games for sale. Oppo Wolf £20, Chase HQ £20, Shadow of the Beast £25, Power Drift £15, Barbarian £10 if bought single. In one bunch they will go for £85. Tel :432-933.

ATARI 520 STFM with £250 of top class games and two zipstick joysticks. Everything boxed with instructions £300. Tel: 0554 753059.

AMSTRAD CPC 464, Green monitor, TV Modulator, joystick, magazines, 200 games. Boxed £600 + sell for £200 ono, Excellent condition. Tel: 0865 340019.

ATARI 520 STFM plus Atari 1Mb external drive plus £1200 original software worth £1700. £500 no offers. Tel: 0268 284021.

SPECTRUM for sale 128K +2 with, joysticks Interface, loads of games and light gun. Price £160. Tel: 590-0012.

KONIX SPEEDKING plus customised Autofire £20 brown, blue or gold. Write to J.Molden, 10 Cheshire Rd, Partington. M/CR. M31 4HT.

AMIGA A 500 Joystick Manuals, Games, Falcon + Mission Elite, Muisic Etc. Under Warranty, 6 months old. In Box. £330 Contact Steve 01-449-0470.

WANTED

ST CONTACTS wanted to swap all the latest stuff. For Free PD software send a disk to PO Box 76, 2995 ZJ, Heerjansdam, Holland.

WANTED Comprehensive stock control programme to be used with Commodore 64 and disk drive. Tel: Finnies Motorcyles, Inverness 0463 243766.

PLEASE HELP Indy Temple of Doom game wanted for Atari ST good price paid for original copy Tel 4613369 Den.

CAN ANYONE sell me an external 1 meg 3.5 disk drive for under £50 for the ST. I would consider swapping 1mg scanner for the drive. Tel: 0633 262660 after 5pm. Ask for Steve.

WANTED A500 external disk drive any condition. Contact Den on 01-459-0940 any time after 5pm. Pay Okay price.

SEGA Games wanted will pay £10 for ones required - Tel: 874-5408.

PENPALS

ATARI + AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Lots of games, beginners welcome. 100% reply and fast, write to Don, 3 Mosslingal, East Kilbride. G75 0HH.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Home and overseas. Fast and reliable. Contact Tarquinn, 23 Peter St, Kelso, Townsville QLD 4815, Australia Tel 077 740 946.

AMIGA Contacts wanted with interest in games or writing music. Write to Tim Clyde, 9 Heriot Row, Edinburgh EH3 6HU. Please include lists and phone numbers, all letters answered.

AMIGA CONACTS wanted 100% reply. Send lists and disks to Ian Davies, Glen Thorne, Swainshill, Hereford. HR4 7PU.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Write to James, 16 Newby Ct, Congleton, Cheshire. CW12 4JS. 100% reply (prompt).

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted to swap the latest stuff. Write to Gun Miski, Eislebener, Strape 63, 2800 Bremen, West Germany.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Send lists and disks to 16 Lincoln Grove, Marston Green, B'ham. B37 5PL. 100% reply. Disks returned.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted to swap Demo's, utilities, Docs, on hardware projeacts Etc. Gareth Hall, PO Box 418 Woodridge, Queensland, Australia 4127.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Send lists/disks to Ben Kinahan, 29 Bovingdon Close, London N19 5SN.

HAPPY, GAY, behind computer. I have friends want penpals. Send letter, photo, type you like, (it's free). J.Feaver, Wetering Straat 60, 1017sp, Amsterdam, Holland.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted send disks for guaranteed reply within 24hrs to Simon, 28 Downing Gardens, Bulwell, Notts. N968JX. NOW!

ATARI ST CONTACTS wnated with interest in musical applications, contact Paul, 10, Harvey Street, Newtown Rd, Carlisle, Cumbria. CA2 7NX.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted for latest Etc. 101% reply. Send lists to Alfredo, Frankfurt Terminal Market, Hdsre, Box 38, Apo, 09710. Germany.

ST and AMIGA contacts wanted 100% reply. Write to 20 Parkstone Close, bedford, Beds. MK41 8BD. Write to Dom.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted. Write to Andy, 43 Knighton Drive, Stonygate, Leicester. LE2 3HD. No beginners please.

C64/128 friends wanted to exchange news, views, tips, and advice. 100% reply to all over the world. Get writing to Graham Prior, 5 Candleberry Drive, Nahoon Valley Park, East London, South Africa 5201.

ATARI ST Contacts wanted to swap all latest stuff. Send your lists to : Paul, 34 Dartmouth Rd, Cantley, Doncaster. DN4 6EW.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted to swap source code and utils reply to Steve, 5 Southgate Av, Plymstock, Plymouth. 101%. No lamers.

AMIGA CONTACTS wanted 100% reply. Write to: 31 Belfast Rd, Whitehead Co, Antrim. BT38 9SP. Write NOW!

ATARI ST Contacts wanted to swap software. 100% reply. Write to Andrew, 30 Penith St, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. LA14 2BP.

OTHER

LEARNING LANGUAGES? Get "ST-VOCAB" for any ST. Invaluable for tests. £4.99 cheque to David Furlonger, 128 Ingram Av, Aylesbury, Bucks.

HEY! Wanna make loadsa money S'easy. For free info send SAE to Nathon Withers, 40 Heroes Rd, Uxbridge, Middx. UB10 9NA.

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AMIGA Swap. Batman, New Zealand Story, FA 18, Interceptor, Mr Heli, Kristal and more Interested. Tel: Malcolm 0252 625886.

C'mon Y'all Atarist replay 4 users wanna swop samples? Write to: Paul Sennet, 51 Yeading Lane, Hayes, Middx. UB4 0EN.

EARN £££'s simply and legally for more information send SAE to Chris Palmer, 27 Staner Villas, Brighton, Sussex. BN1 7GN. ACT NOW!

HELPLINE

PLEASE could somebody tell me the difference between the AMIGA and ST and which has the best future? Also how can I use Teletext with them and are modems any use for clubs Etc? Write to 40 Welsford Rd, Norwich. NR4 6QG.

EXPERIENCED ST user needed to help new owner with occasional problems. Write to: Z Osman, 18 Saxby St, Leicester. LE2 0ND. Tel: 0533 542084.

CAN anyone out there help me with the new game for the Sega master system called "Spellcaster". I cannot find the X-ray glasses, the body armour or the leg armour. Can anyone come to my rescue. Also if anyone out there is having problems with a Sega just write to me and I will solve your problem, don't hesitate to write. I can help with-every Sega game out just now. Write to Glen Mclauchlan, 12c Swallow Rd, Faifley, Clydebank. G81 5BW.

ACE, can anyone help me with a problem, pokes say "reset" computer computer but I do not have a reset cartridge can you use anything else please tell me, I am desperate. And is there any possible cheat modes for FA Cup Football, C64 owner. Stephen Wade, 17 Elm Place, Cookley, Kidderminster, WORCS.

HELP needed with Milennium 2.2. How can I find the Minerals I need to biuld the Spaceships, where are they? And how and with what can I collect them. Please help, as it is driving me mad! Write to: J.Feaver, Wetering Sraat,60, 1017 sp, Amsterdam, Holland.

Please could someone send me a cheat for the PC Version of Rick dangerous. I've tried Pooky on the High score table and it doesn't work at all replies too.Dominic Pearce 2, Valley Prospect, Newark, Notts. NG24 4QZ

Do you need help with your Commodore 64 games, old or new. Also help with most Adventures. If so send me a blank 20 min tape and SAE to Alex McCreath, 65 Kempsthorn Cres, Pollok, Glasgow. G53 5SX. All letters answered ASAP. Does anyone have a program for hacking music out of games. If so please contact me.

Forgotten Worlds, Thunderblade, Helter Skelter, Cybernoid II, Spherical, Kult, Wicked, New Zealand Story, Katakis, +++Tips. AMIGA helpline Service- Easy basic programs, Technical aid info - Contacts, Stores, mags. Tel:313 1614. Write to AHS, Marcus Veehuyzen, 4 Roscrea Close, Waterford 6152, WA Australia with SAE.

Does anyone want to swap Alex Kidd III, Miracle Warriors, Cyborg Hunter, Fanasy Zone III on the Sega. If so send SAE to Chris Mason, 54 Lochinver, Birch Hill, Bracknell. RG12 4LD.

Severley disabled young man requires AMIGA mags/software. I can only afford to pay postage, sorry! Any Amiga bits will be very gratefully accepted. Thank you. Dave Winder, 27 Leith Towers, Grange Vale, Sutton, Surrey. SM2 5BY.

HELP wanted by new group on the C64, can you code like no one else, are your Grafix a picture or is your music sound. If your answer is yes to any of the above then read on. Have you got lots of talent and no demo group to show your work off Worldwide. Well why not help me form a new demo group!! I can handle distribution and PR if you can handle programming them. All disks returned, send Demo disk or letter to Chris/Demo group ENQ 75 Brantley Rd, Witton, B'ham. B6 7DL. Thank you for you time.

BLOODWYCH Help needed. Has anyone opened any towers except Moon and Serpent? Where are the other keys? I also have maps of Bloodwych. Please contact Phil on 698914 (Bristol).

PLEASE could someone help me with the 7th scene in Space Ace, as I cannot get through it. Thanks a lot. Tel : WNTB 777463. Write to ; L.Harvey, 21 Court Av, Stoke Gifford, Bristol.

PLEASE could someone help me? I'm stuck on Police Quest II, Fantasy, Space Quest I,II,III, (all games are for IBM PC). If you can help please send help to: Sam Dowle, 64 Bulong Av, Redcliffe, Western Australia. 6104.

HELP, Please, Grovel. etc. Help me out with football Frenzy! It's driving me crazy! Write to Tommy Guturie, 65 Mallard Pl, E.Kilbride, Scotland. G75 8UE.

CAN anyone help me with these four Sega-games. Phantasy Star, Y's, Miracle Warriors, Spellcaster. If you can help with maps, glues, tricks etc. Then I would be very gratful if you wrote to me about what you know. Flemming Slabiak, Tycko Brashes Alle 3, 2300 KBH S, Denmark.

**NOTICE!!
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SELL? NEED HELP ON ANY GAMES? YES? THEN JUST GO TO P.120, FILL IN THE ENTRY FORM AND SEND IT TO US !**

THE ACE STOCKMARKET ENTRY FORM

ROUND FIVE

Post this form or a photocopy to ACE Stockmarket, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, EC1R 3AU. Closing date 27th April 1990..

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My predictions for the TOP TITLE in next month's charts are as follows:

THE TOP GAME FOR THE SPECTRUM WILL BE:

....

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....

THE TOP GAME FOR THE ATARI ST WILL BE:

....

THE TOP GAME FOR THE AMIGA WILL BE:

....

THE TOP GAME FOR THE AMSTRAD CPC'S WILL BE:

....

THE TOP GAME FOR THE PC WILL BE:

....

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You can also submit a JACKPOT ENTRY: choose any ONE of the following categories and enter your prediction for the TOP FIVE ENTRIES in next month's charts for that category.

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STOCKMARKET (COMPANIES) ... ☐

My five predicted top entries for my Jackpot Category are:

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All entries must be received by the closing date for this round of April 27th1990.

No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

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The decision of the judges is final and correspondence cannot be entered into.

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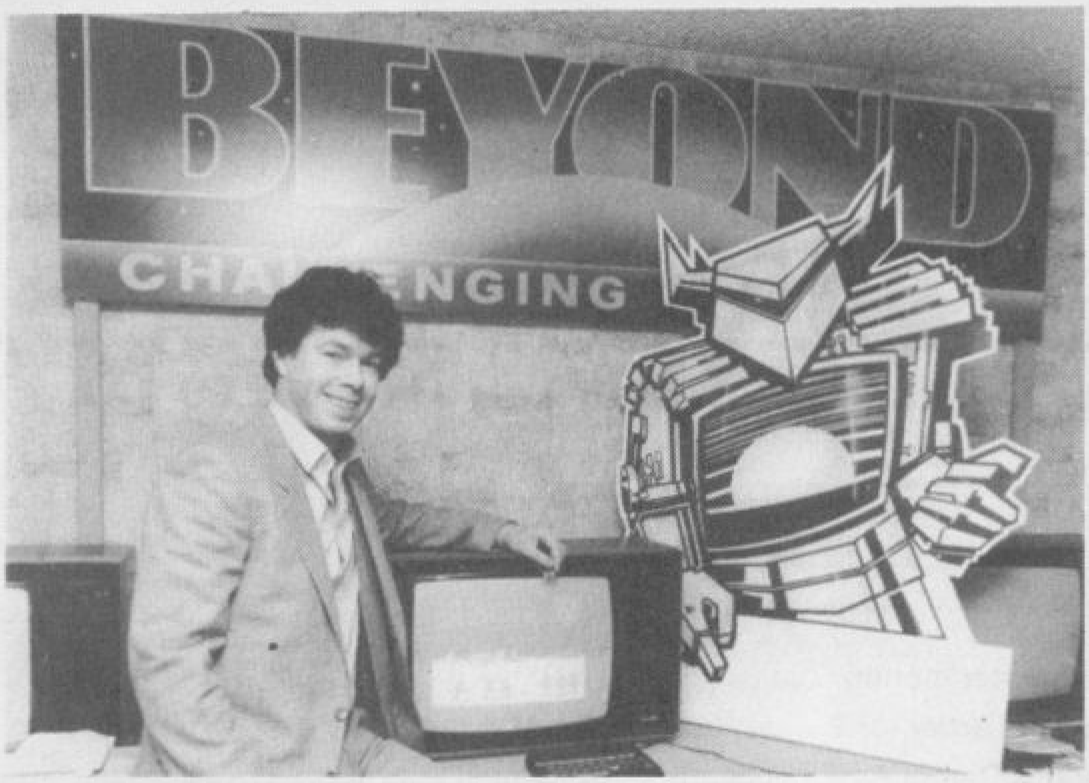


The year is 1984. Attending the launch of Lords of Midnight, Mike Singleton announces that he has almost finished his next major project – Midwinter (reviewed in this issue).

Just as we went to press, Blitter received an invitation from Radio Scotland to participate in a broadcast discussion about sexism in computer software. Would, the lady enquired, we be interested in defending the industry against the vicious allegation that women were being treated in stereotypical fashion?

Defend it?? Surely there can't be any defence at all. Historically, computer games have always appealed predominantly to males and the various attempts to woo the female half of the population – Infocom's romantic *Plundered Hearts*, or the ancient *Games For Girls*, for example – have been either embarrassing, unsuccessful, or both.

All this could be about to change with the advent of CD technology. Giant corporations like Philips and Sony, who are the driving force behind the introduction of new entertainment media, are unlikely to overlook half the population as they build their profit forecasts. Furthermore, CD technology is viewed more as potential family entertainment than computer games, particularly since the latter are still seen as being technologically daunting or de-humanising. The real importance of CD-I may turn out to be not its technological superiority but the fact that Mummy will want to use it as well.

Meanwhile the traditional computer games industry has come up with an answer to the problem of attracting women. It's called Dean Barrett. At a recent industry conference in Malta, Dean (ACE's marketing manager) was to be seen striding confidently across the hotel lobby in his boxer shorts. Unluckily for Dean, and to the intense interest of the ladies present, the man was a little more undressed than he thought. Anyone who had a camera and the sense to use it can expect a large cheque from Playgirl magazine – and subscriptions for ACE are expected to soar dramatically.

Meanwhile at the same conference, industry heavyweights spent their time roller skating, lying by the pool, playing the piano in the lobby, clubbing, complaining about hotel food, complaining about the taxi drivers, and comparing Malta to downtown Beirut. In other words, the conference was a tremendous success...

*

Good news for *Kick Off* fans. ACE can reveal that one feature of the as-yet unfinished *Kick Off 2* will be the ability to load in teams from *Kick Off 1*. You can therefore practise to your heart's content on the old game, then go forth and conquer.

*

The Bitmap Bros may be hot cakes when it comes to coding games, but they don't have quite the same cutting edge when it comes to challenging the house advantage at roulette. At a recent conference in Nice, the lads were jollied along to the casino at Monte Carlo in a coach by Mirrorsoft. The coach, they were told, would leave at 1.00AM sharp and anyone who missed it would have to make their own way back. The boys decided to make their own way back by taxi.

At 3.00am the conversation must have gone something like this...

Bitmap One: "Well, that's me cleaned out. Let's head for home."
Bitmap Two: "Me too. Not a penny left..."
(AN AWKWARD PAUSE)
Together: "Ooops..."

A frantic phone call to the hotel was followed by a car and a large bill.

*

Strange how companies work. The day we heard about the Amiga apparently outselling the ST was the day we were invited to interview Bob Gleadow of Atari. Now we've heard about the CD Amiga... and an Atari conference on 27th March. Are they by any chance related?

Blit-blit!

EAT FROG'S LEGS

...plus pasta, spaghetti, paella, and bratwurst in next month's spectacular Euro Issue.

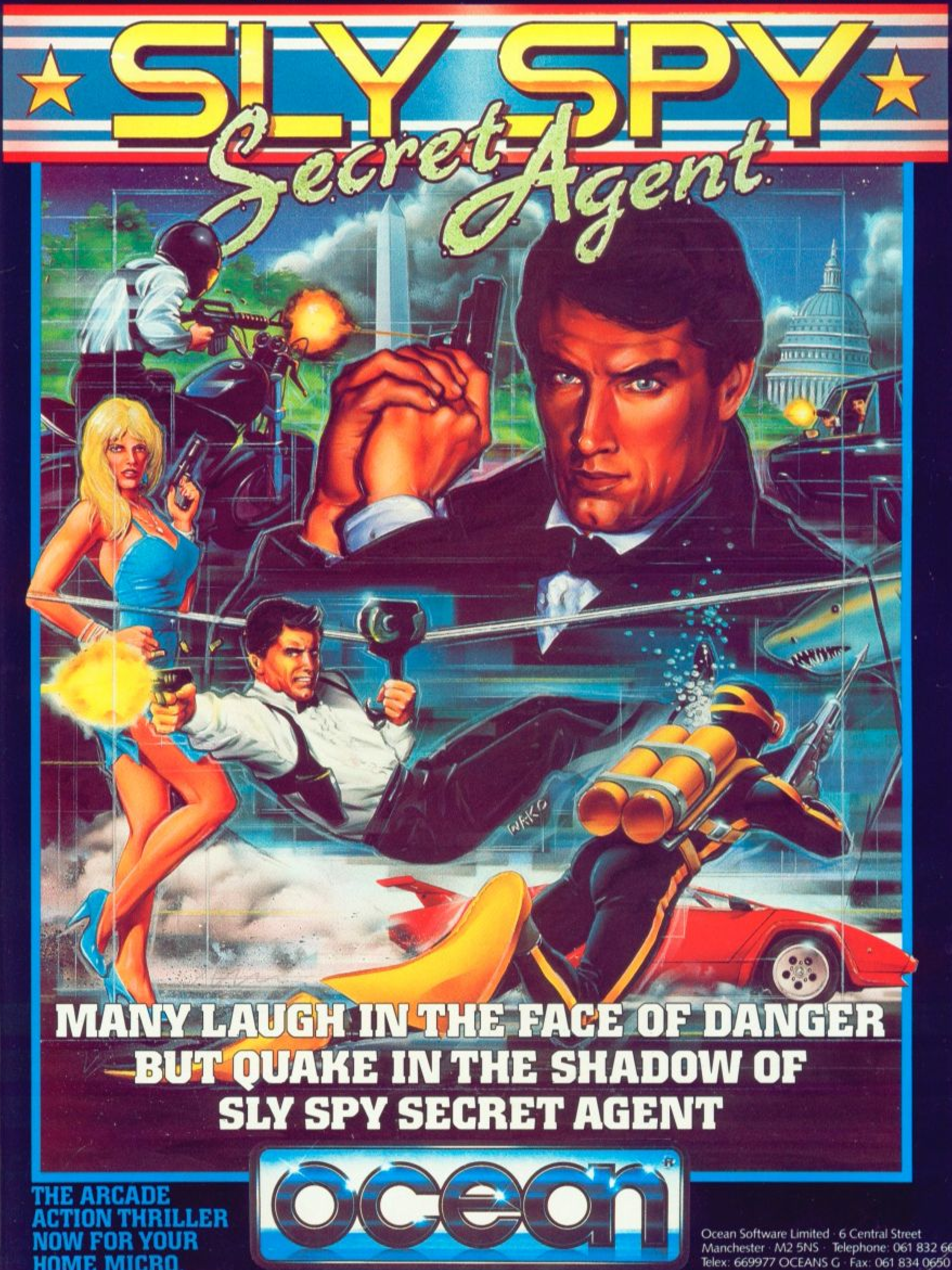
For the first time ever, ACE is going to cover the entire European Software industry and show the world the gauntlet that Europe is throwing down to the USA and Japan. We'll be visiting software houses and hardware developers across the continent, bringing you exclusive reports on companies large and small. Features currently planned include Coktel's CD development, Don Bluth's state-of-the-art animation work in Ireland, and Philips – giants of future interactive CD technology.

Not to mention, of course, the usual authoritative game reviews, news, tips, and features from Britain's leading entertainment technology magazine.

Ooops!

Oops of the decade last month. Hoping to include Cyan (programmers of *Cosmic Osmo*) either in our US Issue or this one, we arrived in Washington DC to discover that they were actually over 1000 miles away in Washington State. Our red faces were, of course, due entirely to sunburn.

THERE'S NOWHERE TO HIDE FROM...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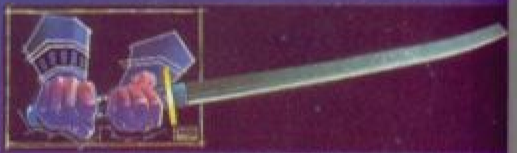

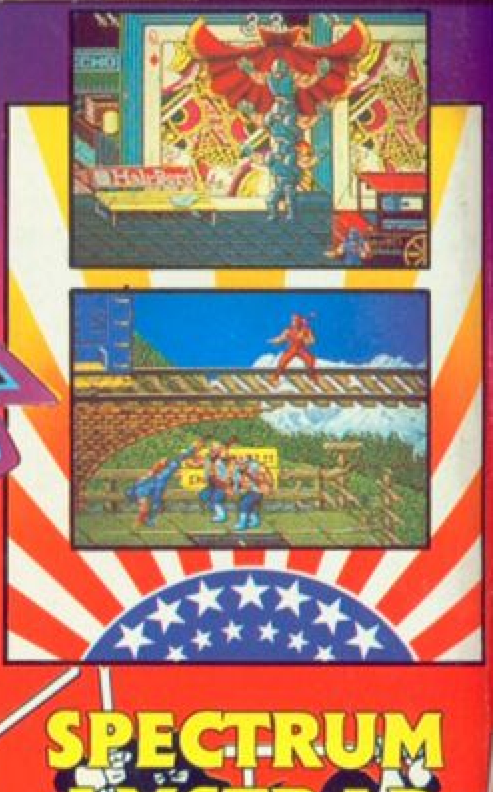

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